



# SIERA BEACON



Carson Valley, NV

September 2021

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



## **Gunther Noder K8UB ZOOMs Into Our First In-Person Meeting**

Our first in-person meeting in almost two years not only took up where we left off - with Ed Terlau's updated presentation about home generator systems - but ZOOM technology allowed one of our elder members to listen to the meeting from his room.

About two months ago, Gunther Noder K8UB suffered a few falls at his residence. Sustaining injuries, his family took him to the hospital, and then to rehab where he remains today, as he reported during the SIERA net on August 24th.

His good friend, Robert Plant W7NEV, contacted SIERA to see if a ZOOM connection could be set up at the church so that Gunther could participate in the meeting. Jim Sanders AG6IF and Robert pulled it all together in time for the July meeting.

In an email, Robert wrote:

*"Gunter is worried that with his neurological mobility issues that he will not be able to continue with Amateur Radio. I assured him that if there was a will, there was a way and that we will certainly come up with some creative and simple ideas for him. I appreciate the club allowing me to do this for him. He has been feeling down with all of the health problems but he was in very high spirits yesterday because he was able to see everyone. Thanks again!"*

Meanwhile, Ed Terlau updated some material to his 2021 presentation, but you can get the major gist of what he had to say by checking out the May 2020 Beacon article in the link below:

<https://www.cvhams.com/newsletters/SIERA%20Beacon-2020-05.pdf>

One of the biggest take-aways from his talk was that individuals should think about what they actually need to keep running during a power outage. You don't need to power your entire house, just the essentials: freezers, refrigerators, well pumps, furnaces/air conditioners. All the computers, cell phones, and TVs can take a respite until the power is restored.

**If the good Lord's willin' and the creek don't rise (and we wish it would), our September 4th Board and General meetings will return to the United Methodist Church in Gardnerville (1375 Centerville Rd.) Board meeting at noon, General at 1 p.m. Bring a mask. We will discuss preparations for evacuation. Jim also plans to bring a lesson for some aspect of radio. If the church is allowing evacuees to use their facilities, Jim will email a alternative location.**

### **Mini-Static Ham Swap**

Saturday's going to be a busy day: a giant ham swap meet in Reno in the morning and the SIERA meetings in the afternoon. The Reno HamSwap begins at 7 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 4th in the Cabela's parking lot 8650 Boomtown Garson Road, Verdi, NV Exit #4 - Interstate 80. Visit <http://renohamswap.com> for map and directions.



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### **Caldor Fire Evacuations**

Conditions are happening so fast with the Caldor Fire that by the time this Beacon arrives in your email, we may all have left Carson Valley. Of course, that sounds hysterical, but we are learning that these are ridiculous events on a Biblical scale. With that said, evacuation preparations are high on everyone's minds. The Watering Hole and this month's SIERA General meeting will focus on this issue. One member of SIERA shared his basic bug-out list that he's been honing since the last time he had to evacuate for a fire last year. Rather than share that exact list, for privacy sake, the Beacon will list ideas from it you may consider in making your evacuation plans.

Evacuations can take anywhere from a few hours to several days. First thing to think about is what will you need for a few days. It depends on where you plan to shelter and the distance you'll travel. Remember, your transport capacity will determine what you can take with you. How much can you pack in your car? Or are you throwing everything you can into a travel trailer/RV? Do you have pets or livestock to transport?

- So for those few days, you'll need a change of clothes, medications, cell phone/computer and chargers, important papers, cash/cards, water/food for yourself and animals. Carriers, of course, for the animals. One local ham has chickens and has purchased a special carrier for them. If you have a mobile radio or hand-held, great. But do you really need to take all your radios?

As for important papers, wills and other such documents can safely remain behind in a "fire safe" or in a bank deposit box. You'll need to take birth certificates, insurance papers, all forms of ID possible, and recent copies of utility bills. *You need to prove who*

*you are and what creditors and insurance agents need to be contacted.* By the way, insurance companies love photos of your house and furnishings. All of these documents can be stowed in a zippered loose-leaf binder that's easy to grab and go.

- One wallet or purse to hold cash/cards, keys, meds, and other small items. This is your "possibles bag." What are you going to reach for every day? Meds are high priority. And don't forget the cell phone charger.
- Amusements: books/e-reader, deck of cards, laptop/cellphone. You'll go wiggly wherever you go if you don't have those things you go to everyday to have fun. You don't need to take your whole library (unless you have an e-reader) or your entire yarn/fabric stash, or what have you. Remember your transport capacity.
- Self-defense. You may want to carry a gun or other self-defense item and ammo. Do you need to take the whole collection? A metal gun safe will protect your guns, coin collections, cameras, radios, important papers, any other items that you definitely want to preserve? These safes come in lots of different sizes and can withstand all kinds of mayhem. Consider purchasing one. Don't forget your CC papers.
- Electronics: this is a big one, but small enough to transport easily. We tend to keep our whole lives on the laptop ... at least some of us do. External hard drives can save "second copies" of all important papers. Be sure to bring the chargers. One tote bag or backpack can carry all this stuff.
- Tools: it's good to keep a few essential tools in your car anyway, tucked in some containment space where you can get to them easily but won't be thrown around if you're in a rollover accident. Only the essentials! Check your spare tire's air pressure and the equipment. Do all the tools match? It's a nasty surprise to have a flat out in the desert learn your jack doesn't have a useful tire iron that fits. (There's a story behind that.)
- Communications: having that mobile radio and/or hand-held is great, especially when local repeaters are programmed in. If you're out of range of those repeaters, try using the reverse on a local repeater and go Simplex. To keep up with what's going on and to enjoy a bit of music or entertainment, there are hand-crank short-wave radios that are great to have. There's even a tiny version that's about 2"X2"X2" that cranks and pulls in stations from several miles away. Throw one of those in your possibles bag.
- Batteries: the new battery systems come in lots of sizes and often have their own solar panels to set up once you've made "camp." Also, there are lots of solar panel options that are small enough to hook to your purse or belt and can charge phones, computers, or pads. Try them out with medical devices to see if the charge is strong enough.
- Unreplaceables: this is the hard one. If you have space in your vehicle(s), family albums are your precious personal history. It's almost impossible to say "goodbye" to favorite artworks, collections, and other items that bring us joy, but this is where the heartbreak comes. And the hardest decisions. Is it a piece of your heart or is it just a thing? Good luck and god-speed with this one.

YAK! Quite a list. And it varies with everyone. The Beacon hopes this helps you get started. Put these things in places where you can grab and go. And make sure you have gas in the car. Keeping at least a half a tank will at least get you to safety somewhere.

Thank you to my ham friend who graciously shared his list. For more information, scroll down to the Watering Hole section for stories from those who have been through this ordeal.



## **Silent Key**

Garth Grugal KC4M received some sad news recently when his friend and mentor in North Carolina became a Silent Key. Norm Harrill N4NH died August 26th, 2021.

According to Garth, Norm was a very active and generous amateur radio instructor and Elmer who really thought outside the box to make ham radio accessible. He led the VE team, of which Garth Grugal KC4M, was a part, for WestCARS for over 30 years. In fact, he was the first VEC granted permission by the FCC to proctor licensing tests by volunteers. Up to that time, prospective hams had to travel to FCC offices in larger cities to take their exams. He made things easier for people by holding a weekly breakfast in a local grocery store where they had an eating area. Those who wanted to take their exams could come to the breakfast and take it while everyone else ate. Then Norm would send their results to the FCC right then and the tester would have their call sign in about ten minutes. He did this for 37 years until his death.

If you want more information about this ground-breaking ham, check out his LinkedIn account: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/norman-harrill-n4nh-783ba73b>

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## **Fourth Saturday Breakfasts are Back**

Join SIERA hams for breakfast at the Taildragger Café at the Minden-Tahoe Airport every fourth Saturday of the month.

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## **DCART News**

### **Sheila Clement, KA7AJQ, Shares Memories of DCART**

Recently, Sheila Clement stepped down to Assistant Coordinator for the Douglas/Alpine County ARES/DCART organization. In her place as Coordinator, we welcome David O'Hara, KB7DWO, who has already led two ZOOM meetings for the group and has taken upon ambitious plans during a rough, emergency time for Douglas and Alpine Counties. It's been a bumpy transition for David, but we hope he will continue to draw new recruits to DCART to aid these counties during emergencies.

Dave comes with a new 440 repeater he recently installed at his home in downtown Minden. The frequency is 444.100/449.100 with a 131.8 PL tone and will do analog and DMR. If you are into DMR and need code plug info, e-mail Dave at: [dwohara@gmail.com](mailto:dwohara@gmail.com). It should cover the Carson Valley pretty well. Please feel free to use the repeater. He's interested in signal reports and coverage details. Also, he has a

GMRS repeater on 462.675/467.675 pl 141 encode and decode for anyone who holds a GMRS license. It's open as well.

**Now that Sheila's settled into her new position, Sheila shares the following memories:**

From Sheila: Thank you to all present and past Douglas County Amateur Radio Team members. Thank you also to members of our other clubs who are always there to help. Several have passed away. Some have moved on with family and business issues. Several have ongoing personal issues. We appreciate the time you have given us. A special thanks to our Douglas County 911 Emergency Services Director, Ron Sagen, left, for believing in us and having our beautiful ham radio station in your department.



Dick Creley KJ7UK and Dick Flanagan were instrumental in getting DCART started. They arranged our meetings at the NDF airport training center at the Air Tanker Base. Dick Creley, right, was one of the founders of DCART.

Twenty-one years ago, DCART worked with the CareFlight crew in Douglas to firm up training to use 146.520 Simplex with the helicopter in an emergency. Fire and Law Enforcement are the primary helo landing agencies today. It's still possible one might end up in a remote location and need to be communications for landing the helo. Indeed, one Death Ride year, a ham was instrumental in landing the copter. Just ask Paul Gulbro, WA6EWV.



Then there was one year, maybe 2008, that DCART members helped with CareFlight landing for the Jacks Valley Fire Dept (Sheila & LeRoy, JVVFD volunteers) annual Easter Egg Hunt. Jim, KI6HH, you may have helped us at the old station "13" at Alpine View and another exercise.



Then there was our usual Death Ride communications radio set up at the old location for the Alpine Sheriff's office. In our more recent times, Dave Granish, KI6EWK, Debbie Williams, N7XYL, Bob Williams, K7VOC and others took charge with antennas and time on duty at the new Alpine Sheriff's office

Dale Yanz, Dick Creley, and LeRoy Clement really put a lot of hours into the station at the Carson Valley Medical Center. (About 2012) Today, Dave, KI6EWK, is working with the



CVMC to see when it might be timely to get the station back in and operating. (In the photo, he's wearing his DCART t-shirt.)



Dale Yanz and Dick Creley were so instrumental in getting our 911 station into our old Dispatch location. I can't recall the year that went in.

In 2013 we really dove into operations for Unit 900, now CM11. Left, Herb Klemme, AA7MR (SK), LeRoy Clement, KA7UIS, Dale Yanz, KJ6IX

A 2013 photo of some of our members present at our monthly meeting at Station 12.

Left-right seated: Dale Anderson, KV7S, Sheila Clement, KA7AJQ, Bill Maher.  
Standing: L-R Ben Echavarría N7BBE, Bill Schilling, W7WJS, Jeff Cauhape. K7BCV, LeRoy Clement, KA7UIS



Birthday photo of Dennis Hoyt, W6QXZN (SK)



Editor's note: And who can forget these two troublemakers, Dale Anderson KV7S and Joe Turek AB7TJ (SK). These two gentlemen seemed to be joined at the hip and helped with everything DCART and SIERA did. Joe was even named Volunteer



of the Year in Douglas County for all his community work.

Thank you, Sheila, for your memories of DCART.

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

### **Evacuee Stories and What They Learned**

The Sept. 1st discussion on the Watering Hole focused on evacuation. We didn't have to wait too long for comments. Bill K7DUY in Ruhensroth and Mike N6GEM in Markleeville had lots to say about their experiences.

Bill had an off-grid house in Calaveras County that had a 2200w solar array and propane to power everything. When he and his XYL had to evacuate for a fire a few years ago, they turned off the propane and the freezer. The only thing left was the refrigerator. Even with the smoke, the solar array and batteries performed at about 25% which was plenty of power for the fridge.

Bill and wife were just returning from a vacation when the evacuation order was given. They loaded up the trailer with everything they needed, but forgot one very important thing. Her medications. Strange how there's always something. Daryl KE7HDX had visitors sheltering with him and they also forgot an item they use daily: the power cord for their cell phone.

It was a long two weeks waiting to return home, but they also had a landline phone with an answering machine. They would call the house and the answering machine came on, they knew the house was still there. Bill's main concern, though, was the ice maker in the fridge. He was thrilled to find no puddle of water in the kitchen when they came back home. He's added "empty ice tray" to his bug-out list.

Fast-forward to the Tamarack Fire and Bill once again waited to evacuate. They packed up a go box and left it next to the front door until the emergency passed and they could put everything back. Practice makes perfect.

Speaking of practice, Mike N6GEM moves between San Diego and Markleeville every six months. So he's used to packing up the essentials he'll need. When the Tamarack Fire forced him from his home, though, he had already made out of a list that helped him get everything in an organized fashion. His list is prioritized by time: what to grab in fifteen minutes, thirty minutes, an hour, and so forth. Depending on the time available, he can load more things into his vehicle. There were only a couple of papers he forgot, but the Sheriff escorted Mike and others back to Markleeville to pick up items they forgot. That was a lucky break.

When the fire passed town, Mike said the property damage inspectors came through to check every house. Apparently, they do cleanup as well as damage assessment because Mike found they had turned off his main propane tank and moved the BBQ tank away from the house. He figured they would probably turn off the natural gas too.

This was a question that was plaguing Sue KI7CTT. During her CERT training, she received a tool specifically for turning off the gas valve, but she couldn't remember if that was necessary for wildfires. Earthquakes, yes. Ed KE7ZOP verified it was important for earthquake safety, but if a wildfire was burning your house, it wouldn't matter much.

Another evacuee who chimed in was George W6SUV. He camped at Sheila's KA7AJQ for a while until the smoke got to him and he boogied south to Monitor Pass. For several hours, he enjoyed clear air and brilliant sunshine, rhapsodizing about the stars and moonless night on the top of Monitor Pass. The Watering Hole moderator was quite jealous.

Traci W7PSI added this to the mix of things to do to protect your house: <https://www.firezat.com/>. We're sure there would be plenty of time to do this after receiving an evacuation notice. Traci calls this the Tin Man Halloween Costume for your house. So true, Traci. Thank you. And thanks to all who contributed to this discussion.

Thursday morning, Billie Jo McAfee shared this video of firefighters using this foil to protect cabins. Aha! So they're the ones who would do this. Good the know.

[https://www.facebook.com/billiejo.mcafee/posts/6259322820774474?from\\_close\\_friend=1&notif\\_id=1630588263828298&notif\\_t=close\\_friend\\_activity&ref=notif](https://www.facebook.com/billiejo.mcafee/posts/6259322820774474?from_close_friend=1&notif_id=1630588263828298&notif_t=close_friend_activity&ref=notif)

### **State of NV DEM (W7DEM) Wednesday Morning Nets**

If you want to test your equipment for emergency communications work with DEM, check out their website, <https://www.carsoncityares.org/WedNets.html> for details on how you can check in on a wide variety of frequencies and modes, including VHF, HF, DMR, CW, WinLink, and Fusion. This is an opportunity to exercise your capabilities to assist during disasters and emergencies. There is no complex protocol involved with these nets. Just tune in to the designated frequency and mode at the scheduled time frame then give Net Control your name, call sign, and location. CW simply requires your call sign.

### **Nets Available in Carson Valley and Beyond:**

**The SNARS Noon Net** daily on 147.150.

**Daily Carson & Eagle Valley net**, Mon-Sat, 6 p.m. on 28.435 MHz USB

**BARC Nightly Net**, 8 pm on 146.655MHz 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 147.330/147.240MHz. The fourth (and fifth) Mondays on 147.270/147.240MHz.

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

**SIERA VHF/HF Nets**, Tuesdays: 7:30 p.m. on 147.330/240MHz; 8 p.m. on 3982KHz.

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

**W7DEM Net**, Wednesday mornings on various frequencies. Check this website for details:

<https://www.carsoncityares.org/WedNets.html>.

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

**The Watering Hole**, Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. on 147.330.240MHz,

*"questions and answers pertaining to amateur radio."*

**SKYWARN** at 7 p.m. Wednesdays 441.650MHz.

**NV ARES Net** Thursdays at 7 p.m. Echolink conf server NV-GATE 152566 IRLP Western Reflector Ch 8: 9258

**SNARS Hospital Net**, Fridays at 10:00 a.m. on 147.030/147.150MHz

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

**Lyon/Churchill Area Emergency Radio Communications Net**, Fridays at 6 p.m. on 147.345MHz.

**RARA Rural Amateur Radio Assn.**, Fridays at 8 p.m. on 147.180MHz 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. 146.760MHz pl 123

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

**Lyon County Amateur Radio Emergency Service Net**, Sundays at 7 p.m. on 147.345MHz.



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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.



### Keifer Bly KJ7LYB Video: Propagation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1WfaDOR4BL0>

### Famous Amateur Radio Operators

Every afternoon or evening, Chuck Gervie K7PGI and Ed Eggert K3VO rag chew on NV7CV about all kinds of things, from politics to guitars to ... well, few topics are taboo for these two. One day recently, they touched upon the subject of famous hams. There's quite a list. Here are just a few:

<https://www.qsl.net/w5www/famous.html>

[https://nofars.net/jacksonville\\_radio\\_collection/famous\\_amateur\\_radio\\_operators](https://nofars.net/jacksonville_radio_collection/famous_amateur_radio_operators)

### **Have you ever had contact with a famous ham?**

<https://www.eham.net/article/16426>

#### ***People also ask:***

Is Tim Allen a ham radio operator? Actor and comedian Tim Allen not **only plays an Amateur Radio operator on television**, he is one! Allen got his Technician license on September 4, but did not release the news until this week. ... "Obviously, most hams are capable of finding Tim's call sign, if they feel the need," he conceded.

<http://www.arrl.org/news/actor-tim-allen-gets-his-ham-ticket-for-real>



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### Taking Licensing Exams During the COVID Era

SNARS schedules exam sessions at the REOC in Reno. Just click on this link for more information and registration: <https://snars.org/exams/>

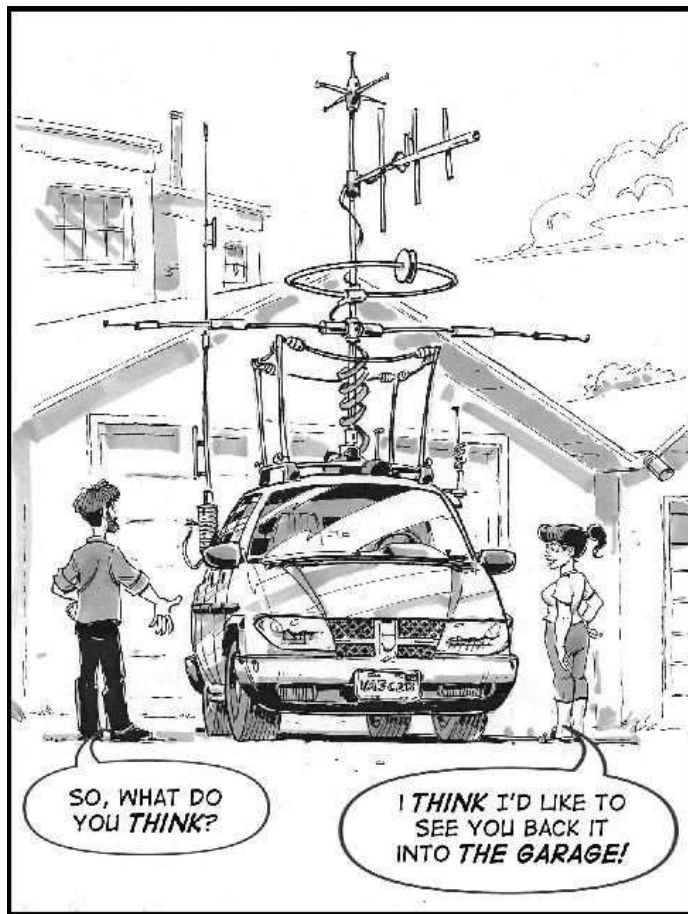
#### **Good online resources for learning amateur radio:**

**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*.

**Ham Test Online** <https://www.hamradiolicenseexam.com/study.jsp>



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