



In This Issue

- [A Word](#)
- Editor's Note
- [Humor](#)
- [Memorable QSO's \(part 2\)](#)
- [Digital Modes](#)
- [QSL Bureau Note](#)
- [On the Bench](#)
- [The Operating Room](#)
- [ARRL Calendar](#)
- [TARA Calendar](#)
- [Reference Information](#)
 - Local Repeaters
 - Club Repeaters
 - Officer's/Committees
 - Meeting & Club info
 - Membership Application

Contact Us

- Via [Facebook](#)
- Via WWW.AC6EE.ORG
- U.S. Mail:
TARA
P.O. Box 134
Keene, CA 93561

A Word

Dan Mason, AB6DM, President

Hi all,

It has been a pretty good year for TARA, and a pretty good two years for the current officers. I'd like to again encourage you all to consider lending a hand on the TARA board as an officer. It's not hard. We have people willing to be President and Treasurer. We still need a 1st Vice (activities), a Second Vice President (PR), and a Secretary (records), but feel free to pipe up for any role for which you have inspiration or vision. We often share duties as needed to get the job done. I will have a copy of the bylaws with more detail. Interested/willing persons please email me at impresaspeed@yahoo.com, or call me at 661-203-8398.

On another note, we will be having our December meeting/Christmas party on Thursday the 8th, 6 PM (not 7 PM), at Don Perico Mexican restaurant in Tehachapi. The address is 840 Tucker Rd, Tehachapi, CA 93561. You can order off the menu. We will have a raffle for a few prizes as well as a 50/50. We will also have a gift exchange game where you can open a gift brought by someone else, or optionally steal an already opened gift (3 steals max per gift). The maximum suggested gift value is \$25, at your discretion. Let me know the number of people you're bringing via email to impresaspeed@yahoo.com or cell 661-203-8398.

EDITORS' Note:

For the December newsletter the topic will be "Portable Roundup". Please share any of your portable operations whether Summits-on-the-Air (SOTA), Parks-on-the-Air (POTA) camping, mobile (auto, Air, Pedestrian, Bicycle, Skate board...) you've enjoyed this year. Describe your station and any memorable QSO you had.

73 ...Ray W6QPA

Humor

Laura Sherrod — KI6EOG

Adult: A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle.

Committee: A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

Inflation: Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

Secret : Something you tell to one person at a time.

Tomorrow: One of the greatest labor saving devices of today.

Dust : Mud with the juice squeezed out.

Valerie Mason — KK6WLQ

Creation

An atheist scientist came to God and said, "We've figured out how to make a man without you."

God said, "OK, let me see you do it."

So the atheist bent down to the ground and scooped up a handful. But God stopped him and said, "Oh, no you don't. Get your own dirt!"

Memorable QSO's (part 2)

Dan Mason — AB6DM

[Ed. I goofed last month. Dan submitted this and I failed to see it. So here it is.]

By now, I've participated in several Field Day and several DX contests, and have talked to people in distant lands, all on HF frequencies (no satellite yet). But, strangely, two of my favorite QSOs were on 2 meters, and with the same ham.

But first, all get my favorite HF QSO out of the way. It was a few years ago when we were operating what I call Mini Field Day up at High Country Park in Bear Valley Springs. It's a great place to operate out of, and I had brought along KK6WQL Valerie and W6MTB Dan. We were relatively new hams, and were trying out various new items, including my new to me Icom IC-706mkIIG and a MyAntennas EFHW-8010 antenna. I was dialing around for some action and stumbled upon a special event in Indiana. It was the Indy 500 special event station operated by the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Amateur Radio Club, W9IMS. I was excited to talk to someone across the country without the help of Elmers at "Big" Field Day. They were glad to hear me and said I could get a special certificate if I also contacted the Grand Prix special event and the NASCAR 200 event. They graciously held on for KK6WLQ and W6MTB to make contacts as well. Never got the certificate, but it was still fun.

The Next two QSOs I'm fond of were with our former TARA member, Aaron Ray, originally KG6OVR and now N4ARY. The first favorite was when Aaron made his first SOTA (Summits On The Air) activation. He operated 2 meters on Tehachapi Mountain, and I was one of his qualifying contacts. Some of you all reached him as well. The second QSO with him I enjoyed was when my family and I were on a road trip in the Kelso Valley where we served the High Desert Trails Rally. We wanted to show the kids where we operated. While there, I decided to see if I could hit the Bird Spring 2 meter repeater, and see if anyone would return my call. Someone did return my call on that lonely repeater and it was Aaron! What a strange place to reach Aaron on 2 meters! As it turns out, he and his daughter were by Red Mountain probably doing stuff for his daughter's school science project. We were two Tehachapi hillbillies separated by 40 miles and a big mountain. That just shows you the usefulness of 2 meter repeaters.

Digital Modes

Dan Mason — AB6DM

My only digital mode experience is with PSK31 in a very light weight, QRP configuration. I've only made a few contacts as I don't get out too much for this, most of my radio time being devoted to 2 meters and a little DX contesting. My PSK31 is done with a Yaesu FT-817 powered by a 6 Ah Bioenno lithium battery (overkill), and using an end-fed wire antenna or a portable mag-loop. The kicker is that I do my rig control and PSK31 all with Android apps on either my phone or my tablet or both. The two Android apps are 817Companion and DroidPSK. To hook these apps to the FT-817, I use a combination of the tiny BlueCAT Bluetooth adapter by ZBM2 Software (there are also Chinese versions, and free DIY recipes) plugged into the FT-817 CAT (ACC) socket, and the also tiny WolphiLink sound-card interface hooked into the FT-817

DATA socket on one end and the 4 pin headset jack on the phone/tablet. There are other rig control and digital mode apps with other capabilities. It's fun when I get time to use this stuff.

Dick Brown — W6SLZ

Several years ago Ray, W6QPA, put on a demonstration of FT8 at a club meeting. At the time I decided that I was not interested in any digital modes. Almost no SSB signals to be heard. Decided to give it a try. Downloaded all the software and spent several days working with Keith Graves NE7R to make the software work for both of us. Finally got everything working and made my first contact. Even with the bands in poor shape I was able to make contacts. I now have 106 countries logged but only 234 to go. Have worked the world on FT8 on 80 meters. Even made a few contacts on 6 meters. I would say I like FT8 but it is not a replacement for CW or SSB. With that said most contacts on Ham Radio are now made on FT8, 65% of all contacts are made on FT8 per ARRL. To me this does not replace being able to talk with people one on one, like the King of Jordan, Barry Goldwater, etc. Over 4600 contacts logged, but then it is a hobby!

Ray Gretlein — W6QPA

I was first licensed as WN6QPA in the fall of 1970. Over the years I've been inactive way more than on-the-air. But each time I've returned its been a "new" hobby from a technology standpoint. As a novice we were only allowed CW on limited HF bands so I was a CW operator, arguably the "original" digital mode.

In the mid 1990s I was again active this time as a Tech-Plus so I had expanded HF privileges as well as VHF and above. I was introduced to Packet Radio which used the AX.25 packet protocol that mapped to my work life experience where some of our networks were using X.25. Fascinated with this aspect of ham radio, I began dabbling a bit in VHF packet radio using a Baycom packet radio modem and a Kenwood TH-22AT (I still have that radio) and software that I don't remember.

My next return to ham radio was after retiring and moving back to Bakersfield in fall of 2017. I dug out my old QRP-Plus HF radio and an old portable St Louis Vertical (http://winpp.org/events/2010/2010-F-1/ANTENNAS/HF-VER-1/ST_LO-1.PDF) with a W6MMA coil mod kit and set out to make CW contacts... however the bands were dead ... heading into the bottom of solar cycle 24. I upgraded to General class to get more bands and still found that my QRP rig and the poor propagation wasn't allowing many QSO opportunities. As I read about current ham modes I came across an article by Joe Taylor, K1JT, describing his work in moon bounce and very weak signals. I then found other articles on the application of these weak signal modes to HF frequencies. This led to a station built around the QRP-Plus and a Raspberry-Pi running WSJT-x. Suddenly I could make contacts even with my highly compromised location, antenna and QRP equipment. With that station and a Mag-loop antenna I made my best distance per watt QSO with ZL2IFB on 20 meters with 2.5 watts for ~2600 miles/watt.

Weak signal modes (JT-65, FT8, FT4 and other WSJT-X modes) were fine for making contacts, however, they lack the "personality" of a conversation where you can get to know a little bit more about the ham on the other side of the QSO. I wanted a conversational (keyboard-to-keyboard) mode that would handle my low power and the poor propagation conditions. The 30 Meter Digital Group offered resources that helped me explore conversational digital modes (http://www.30mdg.org/30_Meter_Band_INFORMATION_Aug_2010_002.pdf) as well as pointing me to frequencies where I'd be more likely to scare up a QSO.

I'm now operating more conversational modes. K8JTK provides a nice overview of some conversational digital modes at <https://www.jeffreykopcak.com/2017/02/01/digital-communications-in-amateur-radio-conversational-digital-modes-psk-rtty-mfsk-olivia/>

My favorites currently are:

- JS8 (based on FT8 modulation scheme) — <http://js8call.com/>
- Olivia - <http://www.oliviamode.com/>
- PSK31 — <https://rsgb.org/main/get-started-in-amateur-radio/operating-your-new-station/psk31-work-the-world-with-low-power/>
- Hellschreiber — few users but a fascinating mode — <https://sites.google.com/site/feldhellclub/>
- RTTY — becoming more useful at QRP levels as the solar cycle improves

Phil Dolber — W6WBT

I got into packet radio in the early nineties. My wife gave me a TNC 2 clone for my birthday, and I scavenged parts to build a PC XT computer. At that time everyone had the 286 and were looking forward to the 386. The XT preformed all the functions I needed and it was in the shack long after the family acquired a Pentium. Most of the packet activity was Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) and packet mail. I acquired much of my ham shack, second hand, buying from listings on the BBS. I never once had a negative experience, which is more than I can say for many who are selling via the new online used ham radio sources.

A couple of years later, a group of us that had supported the Rim of the World off road rally offered a packet radio experiment. We entered the scorecard data for each car at the end of every stage. Using servers running a rudimentary database called ARES data at, then, the Ramada Inn in Palmdale, and another at the Lake Hughes Community Center we displayed unofficial times and standings for the drivers. For Friday night data was displayed in the bar at the Ramada Inn and on Saturday for the dinner break at the Lake Hughes Community Center and then again at the Ramada at the end of the rally Sunday morning. The Portable stations were a 2-Meter radio, a TNC, and a TRS80 Model 100 "laptop". We entered the data in a specific format via the Model 100's text editor and with the help of strategically located digipeater (tested weeks in advance), the information showed up at the servers. I participated in that activity for about 6 years with some breaks to work net control and provided communications for the sweep vehicle.

As far as HF digital, I got into PSK31 at the end of the nineties. I built a small isolation circuit to go between the computer sound-card and the radio's audio input and output, and the computer RS232 port for the radio PTT. It was a lot of fun to operate once you got the hang of not over driving your transmit signal. You got a lot of help from other hams on the air with this. They were actually quite patient if they saw you were making progress toward a clean narrow bandwidth signal.

I got into Automatic Link Establishment (ALE) and Winlink (email via VHF) in 2013 in support of my emergency communication role at work. Both were challenging to get working with a rather steep learning curve because of the short amount of time I was allowed to get them up and running. For the most part on my own time.

More recently Ray, W6QPA, helped me understand the nuances of FT-8, which helped me get a station on the air. I enjoyed the challenge of configuring the software and getting the station up and running, but I just didn't get into the automatic exchange and the lack of connecting with the human at the other end. Maybe once I'm retired I will play with it again to chase some paper.

6th District Incoming QSL Bureau

Annie — N6ACL

Welcome from your 6th District Incoming QSL Bureau Manager

Hi there TARA Club!

I'm Annie N6ACL and I'm your new 6th District Incoming QSL Bureau Manager. I replaced "Bureau Bob" KC6AWX who sadly passed away earlier this year. Some of you met my husband John NZ6Q who is the ARRL Section Manager for the San Joaquin Valley Section. He visited your Field Day site in June.

The ARRL Incoming QSL Bureau is a clearing house of volunteers dedicated to getting YOUR QSL cards to you as quickly as possible. We receive QSL cards from ARRL, JARL, and similar ham radio organizations from around the world. We receive them directly from DXpeditions and contest stations. We sort them based on call sign suffix and then our dedicated volunteers (one for each letter of the alphabet) distribute them to you.

One of my favorite modes is FT-8. Many evenings I enjoy chasing DX on FT8 starting on 10 Meters when I get home from work until late when I usually finish on 30 Meters or 40 Meters. I've made over 500 FT8 contacts since Pacificon and I'm excited to keep going. One of the coolest things about FT8 is I can be making contacts while working on the bureau (sorting cards, emails, etc.)

So, what does FT-8 and the Incoming Bureau have in common? You guessed it – QSL Cards. We see thousands of QSL Cards coming in from around the world confirming FT8 QSOs with W6 hams! The cards just keep on coming. Some of them are very simple and inexpensive, but a lot of them are very interesting, tell a lot about the ham on the other side and are quite impressive. FT-8 is a great mode for exchanging QSLs because you get to learn something about the ham you connected with from their QSL card. You don't get that from the FT-8 QSO or just submitting the contact to LOTW for confirmation.

I want to encourage you if you're working FT-8 DX, please set-up an account with the 6th District Incoming QSL Bureau or make sure you have your funds on your account so we can mail your cards to you. Also new Technicians can work FT-8 on 10-Meters! We have an 8-year-old Technician in the Stockton club who is setting up his first HF station to work 10 Meters while he studies for his General. He's 8 years old and getting QSL cards!

I also want you to consider getting your own QSL cards. There are lots of examples online from simple and very inexpensive to full color multi-page cards. Your QSL Card should somehow connect with who you are, or where you live or what gets you going every day (including or in addition to ham radio). John NZ6Q has a simple card for FT-8 Contacts and a more elaborate card for mobile CW and SSB contacts. He and I have a cartoon card together his daughter made

for us — so does my son. Cards with cats on top of radios are very popular from Japan, Russia and other places. Australia, New Zealand, Africa seem to like to show amazing pictures of their countries.

Think of your QSL card as that “thank you” for making a contact. If someone gives you a thank you, you want to be prepared to say thank you in return.

We ask you to send the Incoming QSL Bureau a few dollars on account so when we get cards for you, we can send them out to you without having to wait for envelopes, stamps, etc from you. You can check out the 6th District Incoming QSL Bureau at www.qslbureau.org and even set up your account with PayPal for as little as \$10.84

The ARRL offers an Outgoing QSL Bureau Service that’s a great value. Many clubs also “bundle” their member’s cards together and send them in bulk to the ARRL Outgoing QSL Bureau to save their members even more money or to support the club.

QSL Cards are fun, interesting, and educational. Don’t miss out! [Ed. See Annie, John and son Shane’s cards below]

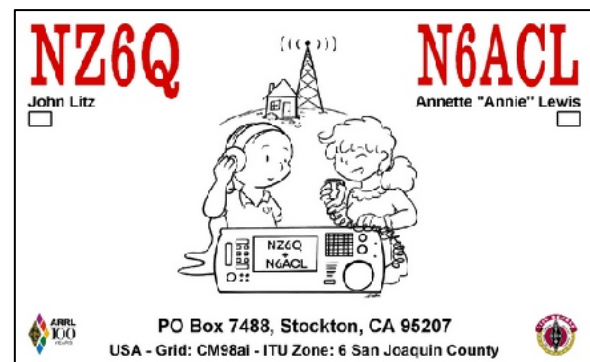
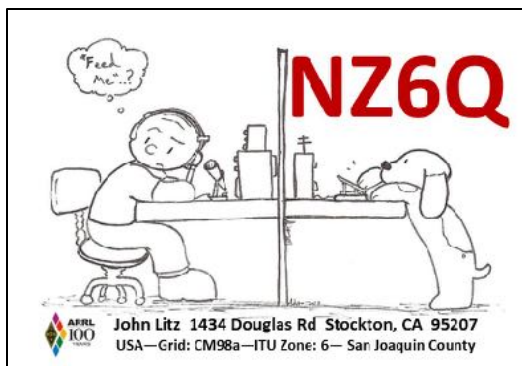
73

Annie N6ACL

ARRL 6th District Incoming QSL Bureau Manager

n6acl@arrl.net

6thdistrictqslmanager@gmail.com



On the Bench

This is a semi-regular column for members to share the off-the-air aspects of their ham radio activities. Using a sports metaphor, on-the-bench refers to a player not currently active in the game. So, applying that in a ham radio context, what is “On-the-(work)bench” in your shack?

Ray Gretlein — W6QPA

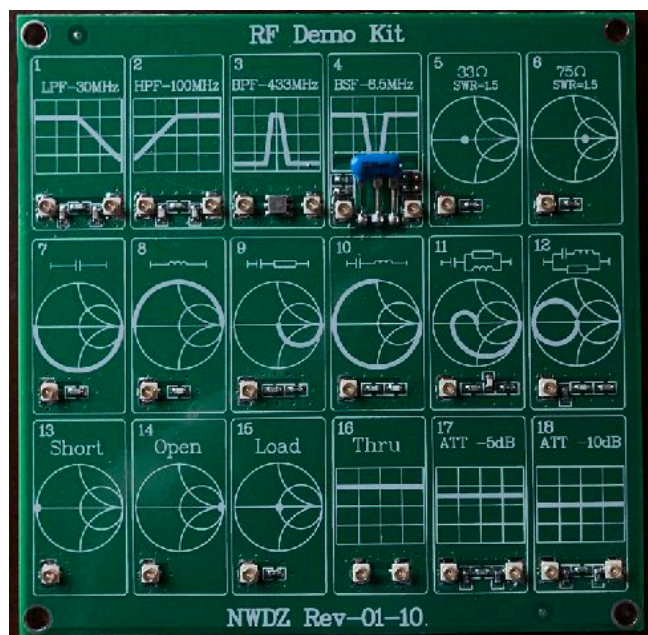
This month I’m borrowing a “nanoVNA” vector network analyzer to tinker with (<https://nanovna.com/>). Of course, this exposed another gap in my knowledge! It provides so much more information than my antenna analyzer. This handheld test instrument is a compact, lower priced version of lab quality equipment costing many thousands of dollars. There are a number of compromises that were made to get the price down to a ham-manageable level, the compromises are described in various books and users guides. There are also many variations based off the original design ranging in cost from around \$75 to over \$500.



My rudimentary understanding of the Smith Chart, which is at the heart of the VNA display of its analysis, was also woefully inadequate to make any real use of the nanoVNA. The above book introduced me to a training aid “RF Demo Kit”. It provides a set of “known” conditions to test that help me interpret the SmithChart display of various real-world circuits.

I’m still not up to speed on the nanoVNA, but I’m certainly learning a lot. I’ll share more info in the coming months.

The model I’m borrowing is the NanoVNA-F. I needed more information on VNA basics. There is steep learning curve (at least for me). I’ve found “NanoVNAs Explained: A practical guide to Nano Vector Network Analysers” to be very useful in explaining basics of VNAs. It also goes through a good explanation of the different versions of this open source project. (Amazon Kindle <https://a.co/d/9wZjhX5> -\$17.)



The Operating Room

This is a semi-regular column for club members to share the on-the-air aspects of their ham radio activities.

Ray Gretlein — W6QPA — My first Real Contest

Last weekend, 5 - 6 November, was the ARRL CW Sweepstakes (CW SS) (<http://www.arrl.org/sweepstakes>). I have always been afraid of working a contest. When I've listened to them in years past, it always seemed such an unforgiving environment, almost hostile. But, I've been working on getting out of my comfort zone and this was the next area to push into. After practicing in the "training" contests like K1USN Slow Speed conTest (SST) (<http://www.k1usn.com/sst.html>) and the CWOPS conTest (CWT) (<https://cwops.org/cwops-tests/>), this was the time to at least dip a toe in the (conTest) water.

Each contest has a required "exchange" of information that must be logged for the QSO to count. The ARRL CW SS has the longest I've seen (limited experience so there may be more complex exchanges). The required exchange is: a serial number, precedence (indicates the class of station Q for QRP aka low power), call sign, check (the last 2 digits of the year you were first licensed), ARRL section. For me the exchange for my first QSO was 001 Q W6QPA 70 SJV

With N1MM+ logging software configured for the CW SS, I ventured out to 15 Meters and listened for CQ SS. It took me several tries to copy KG9X's call but I finally got it (~26 WPM). I sent my call and he came right back! I copied his exchange 39 A KG9X 69 IL with the help of FLDIGI's CW reader. Sending my exchange I mangled my serial number but got the rest of my exchange out. KG9X was kind enough to slow down and ask NR? giving me a chance to correct my error and just like that, I had my first real contest QSO logged. I didn't spend much time in the rest of CW SS as other plans had been made, however, I managed to log 6 QSOs in my first real contest. Feels good to have finally checked that box. I may even start looking for my opportunities.

That's what's been happening in my "Operating Room". How about yours? Please consider sharing your on-the-air activities by submitting something for next month.

ARRL Contest Calendar

This page provides a summary of events sponsored by the ARRL, the national association for amateur radio. The most current information is on the website at:

<http://www.arrl.org/contest-calendar>

November 2022

- 5-7 [Nov. Sweepstakes – CW](#)
- 12-13 [EME - 50 to 1296 MHz](#)
- 19-21 [Nov. Sweepstakes – Phone](#)

December 2022

- 2-4 [160 Meter](#)
- 10-11 [10 Meter](#)
- 18 [Rookie Roundup-CW](#)

January 2023

- 1 Straight Key Night
- 7 Kid's Day — Jan
- 7-8 RTTY Roundup
- 21-23 January VHF Contest

TARA Calendar

This page is a summary of events sponsored by or involving our club.
All dates are subject to change. Please check the club Facebook and [website](#) for updates.

November 2022 (Time Change November 6)

- 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 – 19:00 PDT/PST “Just Because” Net (W6SLZ VHF rpt, 146.70 - / 123.0)
- 3 – 19:00 PDT, TARA Board Meeting, Via Zoom (invite via email)
- 10 – 19:00 PST, TARA Club Meeting, Tehachapi Police Department Conference Room, 220 W C St, Tehachapi.
- 12 — 08:30 PST, TARA Club Breakfast at [Gracian Grill](#)

December 2022

- 7, 14, 21, 28 – 19:00 PST “Just Because” Net (W6SLZ VHF rpt, 146.70 - / 123.0)
- 1 – 19:00 PST, TARA Board Meeting, Via Zoom (invite via email)
- 8 – 19:00 PST, Club Meeting, Tehachapi Police Department Conference Room, 220 W C St, Tehachapi.
- 10 — 08:30 PST, TARA Club Breakfast at [Gracian Grill](#)
- 24 — 08:00 PST, TARA Club Breakfast at BVS Mulligan Room. Reserve a spot with Valerie Mason by 14 December.

January 2023

- 4, 11, 18, 25 – 19:00 PST “Just Because” Net (W6SLZ VHF rpt, 146.70 - / 123.0)
- 5 – 19:00 PST, TARA Board Meeting, Via Zoom (invite via email)
- 7 — 08:30 PST, TARA Club Breakfast at [Gracian Grill](#)
- 12 – 19:00 PST, TARA Club Meeting, Tehachapi Police Department Conference Room, 220 W C St, Tehachapi.
- 25 — 08:00 PST, TARA Club Breakfast at BVS Mulligan Room. Reserve a spot with Valerie Mason by 14 January.

Reference Information

Local Repeater Information				
TARA APRS Digipeater	144.390	No tone	AC6EE-3	APRS
BVS APRS Digipeater	144.390	No tone	WA6LDQ-3	APRS
BVS Repeater Backup Freq.	146.700 145.580	123.0 Hz Tone Simplex	W6SLZ	Open Machine
BVS Repeater	440.625	100.0 Hz Tone	W6SLZ	Open Machine (WIN System node)
Tehachapi Repeater	444.225	100.0 Hz TONE	KG6KKV	Overlooks Bakersfield
DMR Digital	442.675	Offset: +5.000 ColorCode: 1	K7RET	Brandmeister, Bakersfield, CA The location is in the Tehachapi Mountains near Cummings Mountain
DMR Repeater	447.120	Offset: -5.00 ColorCode: 1	KR6DK	Brandmeister, McKittrick, CA The location is in the Tehachapi Mountains near Double Mountain This repeater is permanently linked to the KR6DK analog repeater system.
Tehachapi Simplex	145.58	No Tone		Local Simplex
Tehachapi Simplex	146.54	No Tone		Local Simplex

In addition to the repeaters listed above the following repeaters, part of the Kern System, can be reached from locations throughout the Tehachapi area. They are linked together and more information may be found at <http://www.KernSystem.org>

KERN System Linked Repeaters				
Frazier Mountain (8,000')	447.860	141.3 Hz Tone	KK6AC	Jerry Garis
Cummings Mountain (7,800')	442.95	141.3 Hz Tone	KI6HHU	Lee Bouchard
Double Mountain (8,000')	446.320	151.4 Hz Tone	KI6HHU	Lee Bouchard

<u>ARRG</u> Linked Repeaters				
Cummings Mountain (7,800')	444.425	100 Hz Tone		

ATTENTION:

For those interested in monitoring dispatch for the Bear Valley Springs Police Department

- KCSO Eastern Dispatch — 460.225
- KCSO East TAC — 460.125

All dispatch for BVSPD will be handled by the Kern County Sheriff's Department

Club & Other Websites	
TARA website	http://www.ac6ee.org
TARA Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/TARatehachapiamateurradio/
Antelope Valley Amateur Radio Club (AVARC)	http://www.k6ox.club/index.html
Kern County-Central Valley Amateur Radio Club (KCCVARC)	http://www.w6lie.org
ARRL	http://www.arrl.org
West Kern County Amateur Radio Emergency Services (WKCARES)	http://westernkerncountyares.org/index.html

Officers & Committee Chairs			
Office/Committee	Name	Call	Email
President	Dan Mason	AB6DM	ab6dm@arri.net
1st Vice President	Phil Dolber	W6WBT	w6wbt@arri.net
2nd Vice President	Ray Gretlein	W6QPA	rcgretlein@me.com
Secretary	Valerie Mason	KK6WLQ	val3mason@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Dick Brown	W6SLZ	db24130@sbcglobal.net
Web Page & FaceBook maintenance	John Dyer	KM6DXY	km6dxy@gmail.com

Meeting and Club Membership Information

The Tehachapi Amateur Radio Association meets every second Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM (except for July - no meeting). Our meetings are on Zoom and in-person meeting site is now Tehachapi Police Department Conference Room, 220 W C St, Tehachapi.

Member Annual Dues: \$25.00/year

Additional Family Member: \$12.50/per person

Membership Application

Download a copy of our Membership Application [here](#). Please share this with any friends, family or neighbors that are either hams or may be interested in amateur radio. Applications are accepted at all club meetings or you may mail your application along with the applicable dues to the club Post Office Box:

Tehachapi Amateur Radio Association (TARA)
P.O. Box 134
Keene, CA 93561