

## AMATEUR RADIO'S BEST KEPT SECRET

To answer your question, Amateur Satellite communications. Within a 10 minute period I made contact with stations in Hawaii, Alaska, Pittsburgh Pa., Japan and Florida. Granted not a very rare group of DX, but the time involved was small and I never touched the radio dials. To answer another question, expensive?, sure it can be, but it doesn't have to be, in fact many of you now have the needed gear to work through many of our presently orbiting satellites.

First lets look at the cost: To work RS-10 for instance, you will need a 10 meter receiver and its associated antenna system, and for the uplink you will need a two meter all mode rig with a 3 or more element beam antenna. To enhance the downlink signal, a preamp would help, but you can work the bird without one. That's it folks, sounds expensive, huh? Many of the digital satellites can be worked with two meter FM gear through a modem. In which case the cost of the needed modem(s), assuming you do have a home computer, would be the only additional cost for

your station. And of course, if you wish you can spend the extra bucks for the various amplifiers, preamplifiers, and all mode dual band full duplex rigs to be able to access all the available birds in all their usable modes.

Now, what satellites are up there? Presently the analog satellites are: AO-10, AO-27, FO-20, FO-29, RS-10, RS-12, and RS-15. The available digital satellites are: UO-11, AO-16, DO-17, WO-18, LO-19, UO-22, KO23, KO-25, IO-26, POSAT, and FO-29. Also available are the Russian Space Station MIR and the US Space Shuttle, (when the shuttle is in orbit). As a thought, if you are on packet and would like to work the Shuttle, the call is W5RRR, and the frequency is normally 144.490 FM. You may find access difficult as a lot of people are normally trying to work them, but should be able to get through after a few tries. Also the frequency listed is a typical SAREX uplink frequency, and may change, my uplink frequency for my contact was 144.7 Unless you belong to AMSAT I

can think of no other reliable source of info on frequencies to be used on any particular missions. I am sure it would be available on the internet, but since I am not on the internet, I can't give you a clue on finding it. The AMSAT address is [kc5jvb@amsat.org](mailto:kc5jvb@amsat.org), but I don't know what information might be available using it.

OK. So how do I work them. First of all, since they are not stationary, you need to know where they are, which is where your home computer can come in handy. There are quite a number of amateur satellite tracking programs available at reasonable cost, and with them up and running, information about the next pass of your favorite bird is just a few keystrokes away.

Is it fun? Certainly, if you like to meet courteous and helpful people and like to chase DX. Is it a challenge? You bet, if you enjoy learning new modes, learning how to track and follow the satellites, compensate for Doppler effect, learning how to operate

two vfo's simultaneously to maintain your uplink and downlink frequencies, and if you operate in the analog mode, to be able to listen to your own signal as well as the operator on the other end. One other thing I like about it, is that I have yet to make a satellite contact with an operator that was less than helpful and courteous.

For more information on getting started, check out the ARRL reference library for a good source of manuals on the amateur satellite fields, many general, and some quite detailed. Also if you are serious, I would highly recommend joining AMSAT. The membership runs \$30 per year (on a calendar year basis) and for that you get 6 (bimonthly) issues of the AMSAT Journal, which keeps you up to date on satellite news and happenings, as well as containing many construction articles for antennas, amplifiers, receive frequency converters and about any other piece of hardware related to operating through the birds. It also contains listing of computer satellite tracking software available through AMSAT available to you with a members discount price. Good Luck—Good DX Happy New Year and Best Regards John WD8LKT

Hi Gang,

It was great visiting with all of you at the Christmas party and a big thanks to all those who helped. It was a group effort and I am thankful that our Klub has so many special people willing to put forth the effort to make our activities fun and successful! A special thank you to Santa (Archie - W8GWR) for the job well done - all the "kid-dies" enjoyed his visit. Also a big CONGRATULATIONS to Jane (N8MOW) our new "Ham of the Year"!

With the flurry of holiday activities behind us, now is a great time to settle down with our radios and do some winter "hamming"! Dave is usually on CW every morning before going to work and keeps regular weekly skeds with a couple of friends, as well as working some digital modes. I enjoy "pocketing" and hope to spend more time on HF than I have recently.

Would you like to upgrade or do you know someone who would like to become a "ham"? If so, then get ready!! For the past couple of years, Roy (N8YYS) has been very faithful to teach our Klub classes but he is taking a well-deserved break. We are very fortunate to have four volunteers who are eager and excited about help-

## President's Corner



Lydia White, AA8UL

ing those interested in obtaining a license or upgrading their present license class. Tentative plans at this time are for Paul (KB8QPY) to teach beginning theory and Archie (W8GWR) to teach the upgrade classes. Code instruction will be taught by Tim (KB8JWF) with an assist by Dave (WA8KAN). It is anticipated that classes will begin mid to late February so that testing will coincide with National Test Day at the end of April.

It was a great 1996 and I want to thank each and every one of you for your faithfulness and help throughout the year. I look forward to many fun-filled radio memories during 1997 and wish you all the best New Year ever!!

**P.A.R.K. ARES NET**  
**Tuesdays at 9:00 p.m.**  
 at  
**146.97**

January 1997

### The CW Filter

Back while I was still gainfully employed, and the employer would pay for schooling, I took a one night a week course on WordPerfect. After some introductory commercials on the good of the course, the instructor (a lady) said to type paragraph such and such on page whatever. I was the only guy in the class and only typed with two thumbs, and when all those gals started clicking the keys so fast it really demoralized me.

I told the instructor that I felt I was in the wrong place. Her comment was, "The poorer you are at typing, the more you need a good word processor program." I think she is right. The word processors also help us poor spellers more than the good spellers. Hi.

This same line of reasoning can be applied to the CW filters. A good cw man can get along just fine hearing ten cw stations at one time but it helps the rest of us to be able to weed out as many of those signals as we can leaving the one we want in the clear.

Have you noticed that the newer hams who make it a practice to do a qso or two on the bands every day are the ones that increase the code speed so quickly? I guess you just have to tough out the first 5 wpm somehow, then get on the air with it.

You can't copy SSB through a good CW filter, and this is why I asked a friend that used to be active on the ham bands if his radio had a cw filter. He had gotten off ham radio because of the rhetoric that he found offensive on 75 and 40 meters. My feeling was that he needed to give another mode a chance as there seems to be more friendliness on some of the other modes.

And as a passing thought on another subject, don't forget that no-code techs have full privileges above the hf bands. It would be nice to have a multi mode (and band if possible) radio monitoring the weak signal portions of the vhf bands. There is a lot of good stuff on these bands from time to time. The SSB calling frequency on 6 meters is 50.125, on 2 meters is 144.200 MHz, and on 432 the calling frequency is 432.100. In our area most qsos on 432 are started on 2 meters then they go to 432.73 and happy hamming.

Curt Fouse K8UC

### Minutes - PARK December 14, 1997

The annual Christmas party/meeting was held at the Washington Bottom Community Building, beginning at 6 p.m. After dinner and Santa's (Ar-

chie - W8GWR) visit, The meeting was called to order at 7:20 p.m. by our President, Lydia (AA8UL). Introductions were made by 56 members and guests.

Minutes and Treasurer's were dispensed with until January 13, 1997, meeting.

Dave (WD8GMV) gave a brief report on the 39 repeater at its new location.

PARK's VE's helped out at the EOC with testing today.

The 1997 new ham/upgrade classes need volunteers to instruct. Roy (N8YRS) is taking a year off.

The Ham of the Year Award was presented to Jane (N8MOW) and a big round of applause was given to all those assisting with the Christmas dinner.

John (WD8DKT) drew the winning raffle ticket. Melissa Smith was the winner of a \$100.00 gift certificate from Wal-Mart. Congratulations, Melissa and family!

Christmas Carols were sung by all accompanied by Jane (N8MOW) and Connie (WD8MIO)

## MORE MIREX QSOs

More than 4000 students and members of the US Air Force Academy community in Colorado Springs, Colorado, turned out January 7 to witness a successful QSO between cadets and US Astronaut John Blaha, KC5TZQ, aboard the Russian Mir space station. Signals were crystal clear as Blaha answered students' questions and talked about the bright prospects for continued cooperation between the US and Russia in space.

On January 8, Blaha spoke with students at several different schools in South Africa, thanks to the efforts of Hans van de Groenendaal, ZS5AKV, who provided the linkup. The contact was also simulcast on 7205 kHz. Blaha answered questions from the students, and allowed that he looks at the stars and Earth from a different perspective now that he's been in space.

Other successful MIREX QSOs were completed between Blaha and schools in Mississippi and Florida. On January 8, students at Harper McCaughn Elementary, Diamondhead, Mississippi, got to talk with Blaha. The contact was a tremendous success, and more than 700 students and visitors were on hand (including TV and newspaper reporters) as pupils asked 14 questions. During the contact, the McCaughn team,

led by Terry Jones, NZ9C, experimented with switching between a high-gain, 22-element antenna and a simple turnstile antenna.

Students at Geneva Elementary, Geneva, Florida, had a smooth, nine-minute contact with Mir on January 9, and the pupils got to ask 11 questions. Russian Cosmonaut Valery Korzun also said hello to the students. Audio from the contact went out over a local repeater, and the proceedings were taped and broadcast by the school's own cable TV network. Outside news media also visited. Blaha returns to Earth later this month (see related story below).

A scheduled contact January 9 with Emerson Elementary School, Snohomish, Washington, was unsuccessful. Another attempt is set for today (January 10).

Southeastern Division Vice Director Evelyn Gauzens, W4WYR, summed up her feelings about the MIREX successes by loosely paraphrasing Neal Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon: "Another bold step for ham-kind." —Rosalie White, WA1STO

## ARRL MEMBERSHIP UP IN 1996!

The ARRL ended 1996 with its largest membership in history, by a very healthy margin. The grand total was 175,023—up 1,461 from the previous month as the result of a membership promotion mailed in November. This is an increase of 3,574, or approximately 2.1%—from a year earlier. ARRL Executive Vice President David Sumner, K1ZZ, called the statistics "not bad for the worst business year for Amateur Radio in recent memory." For purposes of comparison, in 1995 League membership showed a decline of about 0.6%.

Full Membership is up by even more—a bit more than 3.1%—reflecting the second year of the League's effort to identify Associate Members who have earned licenses and therefore are entitled to be Full Members. The figures that follow are based on total membership.

The Southeastern Division is now the largest ARRL division, overtaking the Atlantic Division for the first time. The Rocky Mountain Division posted the largest percentage increase for the fifth time in the past six years. —Dave Sumner, K1ZZ

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