

Di-Dah-Dit

Official Newsletter of the Parkersburg Radio Klub
P. O. Box 2112, Parkersburg, WV 26101

ASTRONAUT SUSAN HELMS BRINGS SMILES TO KENTUCKY VIA HAM RADIO

U S Astronaut Susan Helms, KC7NHZ, took the microphone of NA1SS aboard the International Space Station May 31 to respond to questions from students at Daviess County High School in Owensboro, Kentucky. The contact marked the 15th Amateur Radio on the International Space Station QSO and the second with a Kentucky school.

"Welcome onboard Space Station Alpha. Go ahead with your questions," Helms invited. Eight students obliged with a dozen questions.

Helms told the high schoolers that if the station's communication systems were to fail, "we always have our ham radio, which we could use also to call people," she said. She told another questioner that she had been getting on the air from the ISS "on and off" depending on the crew's work schedule. She said she'd made a few contacts that morning. "I try to come to the ham radio and talk to people as much as I can," she said.

Helms said the international nature of the ISS program has involved having to deal with different languages and cultures. "My crewmates Yuri and Jim--and I have worked very hard to become bilingual," she said, referring to cosmonaut Yuri Usachev, RW3FU, and astronaut Jim Voss. "All three of us have become bilingual so that we can communicate and talk in either Russian or English, and we're doing that extremely successfully," she said. In the future, she said, the ISS will have to become multilingual and multicultural.

Helms also told the students that NASA already was making plans to travel to Mars, "probably with international help." She called The Red Planet the most feasible target for an

interplanetary space mission carrying human passengers.

Helms said she and the crew enjoy their "wonderful work" aboard the ISS but miss their families and friends on Earth.

The audience of students and guests included ARRL President Emeritus George S. Wilson III, W4OYI, who lives in Owensboro. The event also attracted extensive local news media coverage.

"We really are smiling ear-to-ear down here," Steve Morgan, 4NHO, said after the 10-minute contact. Morgan provided technical support at the school. The contact was made via AH6NM in Honolulu, and the audio was telebridged to the school.

The next scheduled ARISS contact will be next week with Henley Schools in Oregon via the Klamath County Schools Amateur Radio Club, KC7VWW.

FCC TO AMATEURS: DETAILED REGULATION "NOT IN THE PICTURE"

The FCC says the ball is in the court of the Amateur Service to determine the course of future Amateur Radio regulation. Speaking May 20 at the Dayton Hamvention FCC forum, Bill Cross, W3TN, of the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, said that the days of Commission imposed regulation are past.

"Detailed regulation of the nitty gritty of communication services,

including the Amateur Service, is not in the picture," Cross said. "Rather, the FCC is shifting to strong and effective enforcement of truly necessary regulations." The FCC, he said, now plans to look to the amateur community to reach consensus on any new regulations it thinks it wants and needs.

"I hope that those of you who are thinking about asking us to carve up a band by fiat will think again," he told the packed forum. "You really are asking us to tie your hands regarding your use of your spectrum."

Before the FCC initiates any rule-making proceedings in the Amateur Service to change privileges, Cross said it wants to see proposals involving the implementation of "new and more modern communications technologies," such as digital. In addition, he said, any future proposal "must include all licensees, and it must include all bands," and--most important--the amateur community must reach a consensus on the topic.

Cross said the FCC does not want and cannot handle "multiple proceedings that address piecemeal changes in operating privileges" that affect only certain classes of licensees or certain bands. "You, collectively, need to reach agreement on how you want to use your spectrum," he reiterated.

Cross said he expected the issue of restructuring operator privileges to come up "in a couple of years" at the outside. "Changes in operating privileges for the different classes of operator licenses are inevitable," he said.

KENTUCKY AMATEUR DIES INSTALLING ANTENNA

A Kentucky Amateur Radio Emergency Service member died May 20 while installing a 2-meter antenna he'd just bought at the Dayton Hamvention. According to ARRL Kentucky Section Emergency Coordinator Ron Dodson, A4MAP, Ronald L. Oller, KG4JVT, of Irvington, died when the ground-plane antenna he was installing fell onto the overhead electrical service line to his house. He had been a ham for about eight months.

Dodson said Oller and a teenaged friend, John Betner, KG4LHQ, had purchased new 2-meter ground-planes at the Hamvention. The pair already had installed one of the units at Betner's home and were in the process of raising Oller's antenna when the incident occurred. Betner was not injured and summoned help for his friend.

Dodson said Oller had a history of heart trouble but said he did not know if that was a factor in his death.

Dodson described Oller as "one of the most enthusiastic hams I have ever met" and as "a generous individual who loved to be helpful in spite of his heart ailment." Earlier in the weekend, Oller had traveled to Dayton Hamvention on a chartered bus with other amateurs from Kentucky's Meade, Breckinridge, Jefferson and surrounding counties.

Oller got his license last October and became involved in public service and, as AAT4YQ/T, in the Military Affiliate Radio System. He also had "elmered" the 16-year-old Betner when he studied for his license.

"It can happen to any of us at any time," said Dodson, who advised caution when installing antennas. "It's too late to help Ron, but, please, let's not lose anyone else to such a terrible tragedy."

A memorial service for Ron Oller was set for May 27.

CANADA MAKES 5 WPM OFFICIAL:

Canadian Basic operators with 5 WPM credit now have full HF Amateur Radio privileges. Effective May 19, Industry Canada has amended the Technical requirements set out in the radio communication Information Circular 2, "Standards for the Operation of Radio Stations in the Amateur Radio Service." The IC grants full operating privileges in all Amateur Radio frequency bands below 30 MHz to operators holding the Basic plus 5 WPM Morse code qualification. Copies of the revised RIC-2 are available from the Industry Canada Web site, <http://strategis.gc.ca/SSG/sf01226e.html>. --RAC

LICENSE RENEWAL!

FCC reiterates license renewal and modification basics: The FCC took advantage of the Dayton Hamvention FCC forum to remind Amateur Service licensees that license renewal and modification now is done via the Universal Licensing System--or ULS. The ULS is accessible via the FCC ULS Web site, <http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/uls>. Bill Cross, W3TN, of the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau noted that Amateur Radio licenses may not be renewed any sooner than 90 days prior to license expiration. When only changing an address, he said, licensees should choose the "Administrative Update" (AU) option. When renewing only, he said, choose "Renewal Only" (RO). To change an address while renewing your license within the 90-day window, select the "Renewal/Modification" option. An application requesting renewal that's outside the 90-day window will be dismissed, Cross said. Modifications no longer automatically result in a new ten-year license term.

Call sign changes are not made unless requested by the licensee. Cross said amateur applicants needing assistance or who believe they have

made an error on an application they've filed should contact the ULS help desk, ulshelp@fcc.gov.

ALINCO SHIFTS NORTH AMERICAN DISTRIBUTION, SERVICE TO OHIO FIRM

A amateur Radio manufacturer Alinco has closed its US branch in Torrance, California, and shifted its North American distribution to an Ohio firm. Alinco product distribution and customer service now are being handled by Atoc Amateur Distributing LLC in Covington, Ohio. The change was effective May 1.

A news release posted on the Alinco Web site says that Alinco will continue to be "a very committed, viable player in the Amateur Radio marketplace" and that all Alinco warranties "will remain in force and continue to be honored through their term." Alinco will exhibit at Dayton Hamvention next week and will sponsor the W8BI special event station in the outdoor exhibits area as it has in past years.

In addition to dealer distribution, the Atoc facility in Ohio is taking over customer support and out-of-warranty service of Alinco products and sales of Alinco parts. Parts sales have been temporarily suspended during the changeover, and service could be disrupted for a time as well.

The announcement said Alinco will concentrate on designing and manufacturing products from its Japan headquarters in Osaka and factory in Toyama.

For more information, visit the Alinco Web site, <http://www.alinco.com/>, or contact Atoc Distributing LLC, 23 S High St, Covington, OH 45318; 937-473-2840.

AO-40'S LEILA SOUNDS HER SIREN CALL

If you're planning to use the AO-40 satellite, watch out for LEILA! The satellite's ground controllers have turned on the LEILA system, which not too subtly discourages operators from putting too strong a signal into the satellite's uplink receiver.

AMSAT-DL President Peter Guelzow, DB2OS, says LEILA was turned on for the first time May 12 after some very strong signals--louder than the middle beacon showed up in the satellite's passband.

"Several people tried to get them to reduce power, but they apparently weren't listening," he said in a posting on the AMSAT-DL site. The situation soon led to "massive grumbling" on the passband, he said.

LEILA soon was set up on the UHF uplink and "it worked like a charm!" Guelzow concluded. If a too-strong station fails to lower power, LEILA notches out the offender's uplink and sends the siren signal to the downlink for about five seconds.

Bruce Paige, KK5DO, who's AMSAT's new awards manager, was on hand for LEILA's debut. He says LEILA can notch out five signals at a time. "So if there are a lot of offenders, you might have to wait to get stomped by LEILA," he said.

Guelzow said if all goes well, ground controllers probably will leave LEILA switched on continuously.

The success of LEILA was dimmed by the apparent failure of ground controllers to get the AO-40 X band (10 GHz) system to operate. Ground controllers haven't given up yet, however. Guelzow said Stacey Mills, W4SM, and Michael Fletcher, OH2AUE, tested the X-band transmitters, both solid state and traveling wave tube (TWT) over the weekend. "Unfortunately, the test was not successful," Guelzow said. Telemetry indicated the proper commands, but apparently no power was reaching any of the X-band modules. Another test will be run soon.

AO-40 ground controllers opened up the next-generation satellite's transponders May 5 for general amateur use on an experimental basis. Uplink frequencies (without taking Doppler into account) are 435.495-435.780 MHz and 1269.211-1269.496 MHz, and the downlink passband is 2401.210-2401.495 MHz. The transponders are inverting, so a downward change in uplink frequency will result in an upward frequency shift in the downlink.--thanks to AMSAT News Service and AMSAT-DL

MISSIONARY-HAM, INFANT, DIE WHEN PLANE IS DOWNED IN PERU

A missionary from Michigan, killed after the plane in which she was a passenger was shot down last week in Peru, was an Amateur Radio operator. The Harrisburg, Pennsylvania-based Association of Baptists for World Evangelism, identified the dead as Veronica "Roni" Bowers, 35, and her infant daughter, Charity, seven months. Roni Bowers was KD4CKM, a Tech Plus licensee.

The Cessna 185 float plane ditched in the Amazon River after being fired upon. Bowers' husband, Jim, and their son, Cory, 6, were not seriously injured in the incident. Jim Bowers is KD4CKN, a General licensee. Pilot Kevin Donaldson was shot in the leg in the incident but survived.

The Bowerses, from Muskegon, Michigan, had been serving in Peru since July 1993. News accounts say the Peruvian Air Force shot down the plane carrying the missionaries in the Amazon jungle April 20. The Peruvian military said it opened fire after the pilot ignored warnings to land, but that claim is disputed.

A communiqué from the Peruvian

Ministry of Defense said that the Peruvian Air Force "deeply regrets the loss of human life." It said its actions were part of its anti-drug operations procedures. Reports say a US military aircraft associated with anti-drug trafficking operations first spotted the Cessna but told the Peruvians the plane might be legitimate.

An investigation continues. Funeral services for the mother and infant were set for April 27 in Michigan.

SKYWARN operator struck!

A SKYWARN operator is struck by lightning: Danny Townsend, KB5ZEA, was struck by lightning on Sunday, May 27, while engaged in SKYWARN reporting. As Townsend keyed his mike to respond to KD5JGW's weather report, lightning hit the tower, destroying the station equipment and knocking Townsend to the floor. He was taken to the hospital and found to be OK, but he says he still has a ringing in his ears. "As we operate Skywarn and ARES, we need to keep in mind the dangers we can be exposed to," said Townsend. "I have always been conscious of lightning and what it can do, but have continued to operate during bad weather. I will continue to do what I can to help my fellow man, but with a little more caution. I will attempt to rebuild my station with total emergency power as well as attic antennas."--KB5ZEA.



7 MHZ "REALIGNMENT" AMONG WRC-2003 ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRELIMINARY VIEWS

The FCC's World Radiocommunication Conference 2003 Advisory Committee has approved several "preliminary views"--or PVs--on expected WRC-03 agenda items. Among these is a US preliminary view supporting a realigned 40-meter amateur allocation at 6900-7200 kHz on a worldwide primary basis. The FCC is soliciting public comment on all preliminary views by May 9.

The preliminary view was developed by Informal Working Group 6, which is dealing with most issues of concern to amateurs. ARRL Technical Relations Specialist Walt Ireland, WB7CSL, serves as vice chairman of IWG-6. The PV says that, alternatively, the US could support a 7000-7300 kHz worldwide primary amateur allocation.

Only amateurs in Region 2, which includes North and South America, have access to 7000-7300 kHz; the rest of the world has only 7000-7100 kHz, with the upper 200 kHz allocated for broadcasting. ARRL Technical Relations Manager Paul Rinaldo, W4RI, says the ARRL would prefer going back to the pre-World War II worldwide 7000-7300 kHz scheme. Some broadcasters, on the other hand, would like amateurs worldwide at 6800-7100 kHz, he said, so they would not have to move. A Radio Conference Subcommittee backgrounder from the Interdepartment Radio Advisory Committee--which reflects views of the federal government--said the issue "is liable to be very controversial."

Further complicating matters, Rinaldo said, is the fact that international HF broadcasters want to fold the 7 MHz realignment question into another WRC-03 agenda item examining the adequacy of HF broadcasting allocations from approximately 4 MHz to 10 MHz. Broadcasters are expected to

seek additional HF elbow room to accommodate digital transmissions to complement their existing AM channels.

Any realignment scheme will involve having to move existing occupants--broadcasters on one side or fixed and mobile services, mostly government and Part 90 users, on the other.

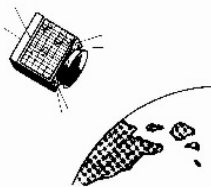
"We want 300 kHz," Rinaldo said--reflecting the position of the International Amateur Radio Union, "but, we have some flexibility as to where it is."

Another PV with implications for amateurs would oppose the use of 420-470 MHz for use by the Earth Exploration-Satellite Service for so-called synthetic aperture radars, or SARs unless it can be shown that the satellites "do not cause harmful interference to amateur systems and stations." SARs are used to map regions on Earth's surface and are expected to be deployed primarily over tropical rain forest areas.

Rinaldo emphasized that the preliminary views do not represent formal US positions and are subject to change as preparations for WRC-03 move forward.

Comments on WAC preliminary views may be filed via e-mail to wrc03@fcc.gov. The FCC's WRC-03 Web site, <http://www.fcc.gov/wrc-03>, includes additional information as well as links to related documents.

WRC-03 is scheduled to begin June 9, 2003, and continue until July 4, 2003. The conference is expected to take place in Venezuela.



WWV SURVEY NOW AVAILABLE ON THE WEB

The National Institute of Standards and Technology survey seeking information on how WWV and WWVH listeners use the standard time and frequency broadcast services now is available on the Web. The survey is posted at <http://www.timesurvey.nist.gov/>. It's also available as a printable PDF or HTML file.

The survey has been available as a hard-copy, mail-in version and promoted via WWV broadcasts. WWV Station Manager John Lowe says that more than 4000 completed surveys have been received so far by mail. "This proves the radio community is large and very active," he said.

NIST says the survey should take just a few minutes to complete. The survey deadline is September 30.

According to Lowe, the last WWV- WWVH user survey was done in 1985. He confirmed that the data collected ultimately could be used to determine whether WWV and WWVH remain on the air-- specially given the popularity of NIST's other outlets, including its Web-based time server that gets in excess of 3 million hits a day. Lowe strongly encouraged WWV and WWVH users to send in a survey, but he has suggested that more weight will be given to survey responses from corporate and institutional users of the radio service than to individuals.

WWV in Ft Collins, Colorado, and WWVH on Kauai, Hawaii, broadcast continuous time and frequency information to millions of listeners worldwide. Information broadcast includes time announcements, standard time intervals, standard frequencies, UT1 time corrections, a BCD time code, geophysical alerts, marine storm warnings, and Global Positioning System status reports.

For more information, contact John Lowe, lowe@boulder.nist.gov.

RADIO HERO!

Indiana policeman receives first Radio Hero Award: Bill Ward, 9RHY, of the Henry County, Indiana Sheriff's department received the Radio Hero Award in recognition of his use of Citizens Band radio in the capture of two suspected murderers. Ward is the first recipient of this award, which will be presented biannually by its sponsors-REACT International Inc, Cobra Electronics and Popular Communications magazine.

The incident involved two Vermont high school students who were suspected of murdering a husband and wife-both professors at Dartmouth College. Ward intercepted a truck-driver's CB call asking if anyone could help these youths with a ride further west. Without identifying himself, Ward told the youths to wait and someone would be along to pick them up!

In an earlier story regarding REACT, ARRL and REACT signed a Memorandum of Understanding intended to promote joint coordination of the resources of both organizations and recognize the capabilities of individual members to facilitate the flow of information to and from the public during disaster and emergency situations. For the complete MOU, see <http://www.arrl.org/FandES/field/mou/react.html>.

QRZ.com is for sale:

The QRZ.com Web site is for sale. Owner and webmaster Fred Lloyd, AA7BQ, says he wants to retire. "After eight years work on this project, I've simply decided to pursue other interests," he said. "When I started QRZ, I also became a certified flight instructor. Now I would like to spend more time teaching people how to fly." Lloyd said the Web site is being offered as a running business. For details contact Fred Lloyd, flloyd@qrz.com or visit http://www.qrz.com/qrz_sale.html.

"Ham helps his 'Elmer' in health emergency:

Kansas Section Emergency Coordinator Joseph Plankinton, WD0DMV, reports that a new ham in his section recently got to return a favor for the amateur who'd helped him get his license--his "Elmer." On April 5 Conrad Lauck, KC0JUV, of Topeka was enjoying a QSO on a local repeater with his old friend Wayne Peterson, KB0AMY, 55 miles away in Horton. Both hams are blind, and Peterson is a diabetic. During the contact, Peterson mentioned that he was not feeling well, and, as the conversation progressed, his speech began to slur. Finally, Lauck heard Peterson key his microphone but not speak, and he knew his friend was in trouble. He contacted authorities in Horton to check on Peterson, who apparently had suffered a health emergency. An ambulance was called, and the crisis was averted.

Smithsonian "Space Day" to include ham satellites:

Amateur Radio satellites will be on display at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC, in conjunction with the museum's "Space Day" activities on May 3. Young people who attend The Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation's (AMSAT) display, can take a crack at building their own MicroSats as they learn more about Amateur Radio and amateur satellites. "Our goal is to interest students in entering careers in the technical fields," says AMSAT Vice President Perry Klein, W3PK. The AMSAT display will be located in the Air and Space Museum's Space Race Gallery 114 and will run from 11 AM until 3 PM.

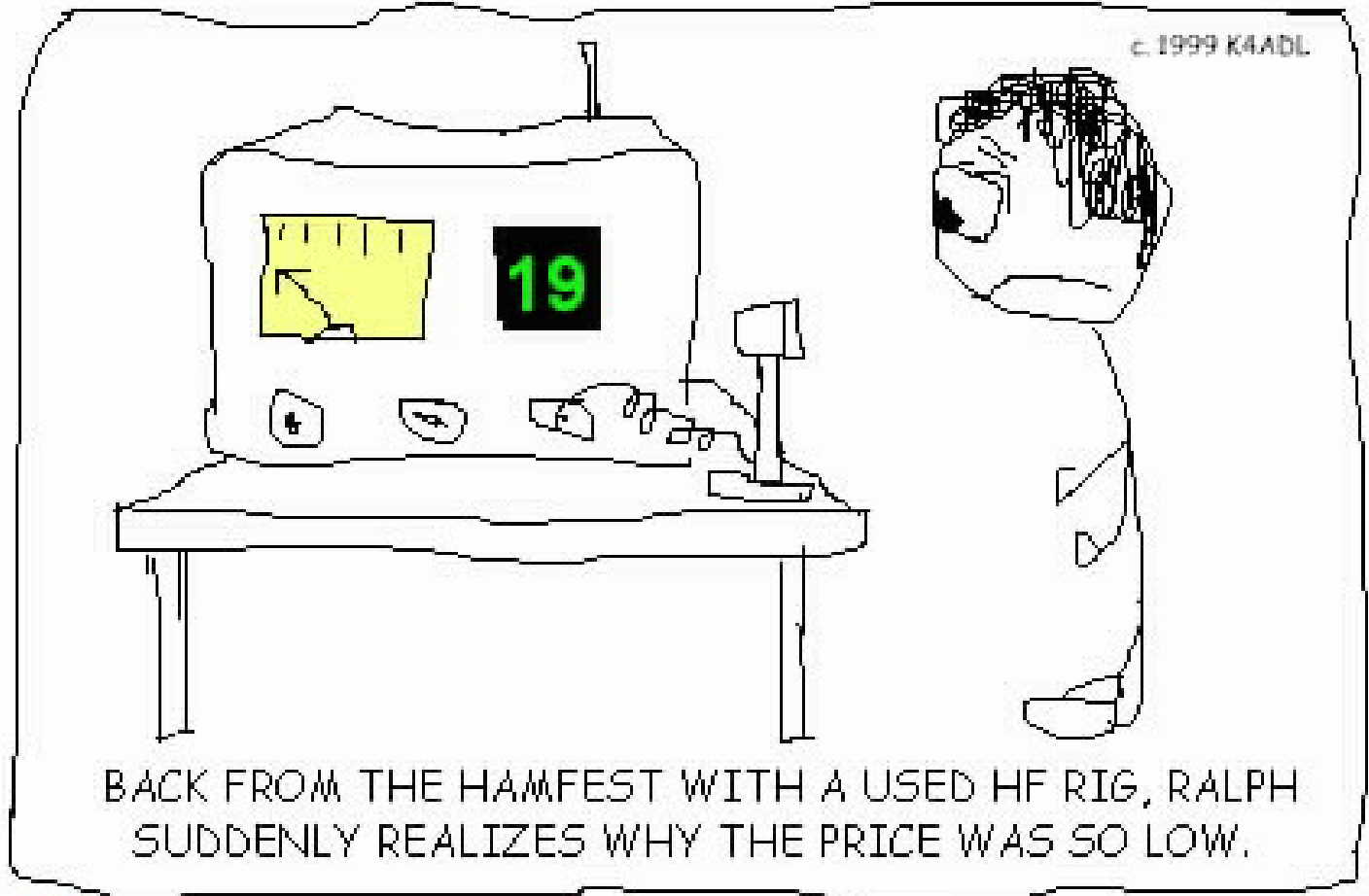
Alinco still catching up with service issues following move:

The transfer of Alinco's distribution system from California to ATOC Amateur Distributing in Ohio is nearly complete, according to Craig Cota, a principal with ATOC. Complicating the transfer was the fact that the Dayton Hamvention occurred as the transition was taking place. "Our timing couldn't have been worse," said Cota. "We were literally unloading a moving van, and driving merchandise directly to the dealers at the show." One aspect of the transfer still pending is the service function. "We had hoped to have factory training personnel work with our staff in the transition. Unfortunately, plans were delayed," said Cota. "We will continue to honor warranty claims, even if the warranty expires during the transition period." For More Information: <http://www.alinco.com/usa.html>.

QSL CARD POSTAGE TO JUMP A PENNY:

It will cost another penny to mail a QSL card (sans envelope) after July 1. The US Postal Service has announced that it's raising the postcard rate by \$0.01. First-class domestic postage in the US increased to 34 cents on January 7. The complete rate schedule is available on the USPS Web site, <http://www.usps.com/>.





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