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# B.V.A.R.A. QRM

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**W3SGJ**

**January 2001**

**144.710/145.310 MHZ - 100 HZ PL**

**447.975/442.975 MHZ - 100 HZ PL**

## **B.V.A.R.A. OFFICERS**

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1.V.Pres.....KB3EAQ Debbie Mehutcs  
2.v.Pres.....N3GZZ Joe Streit  
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KE3ED.....Tony Petruccelli/Station Trustee  
KA3SMF.....Dave Heim/Chief Engineer

## **Newsletter Editor**

N3NBJ.....Janet Petruccelli

## **Newsletter Distribution**

KB3EAQ.....Debbie Mehutcs



## **THE NET LIST**

WPA CW NET.....7:00 PM DAILY.....3.585  
  
TRADERS NET.....7:00 PM MON & FRI 3.898  
  
HOSS TRADERS.....8:00 PM WEDNESDAY.3.910  
  
CALLOUS BOTTOMS...11:00 PM DAILY...3.912.5  
  
WPA PHONE & TCF....6:00 PM DAILY...3.983  
  
ROOSTERS NET.....6:00 AM DAILY...3.990  
  
E-CARS.....8:00 AM DAILY...7.255  
  
COUNTY HUNTERS....10:00 AM DAILY..14.336  
  
RIP VANWINKLE.....7:00 AM DAILY..145.31  
  
B.V.A.R.A. 2 METER..8:30 PM WED....145.31  
  
B.V.A.R.A. 10 METER..9:30 PM WED...28.360  
  
WPA TRAFFIC.....9:00 PM DAILY..146.88  
  
QCWA NET.....8:30 AM SUNDAY.147.03

If you have a submission for the B.V.A.R.A. QRM you may submit it to Janet N3NBJ by any of the following means.. E-mail: ke3ed@arrl.net, Packet: ke3ed@k3oiw.#wpa.pa.usa.na, or typed in text format on floppy disk. Thank you.

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**CLUB MEETING**

The January 2001 meeting will be held on Thursday the 11<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM at the Beaver County Emergency Center located at 250 East End Avenue, Beaver, PA. We'll look forward to seeing you.

**2001 DUES NOW DUE**

For those of you who have not yet sent in your 2001 dues please take the time to do so now. Keep in mind that your dues help to offset the costs of operating our repeaters, pay our insurance and get this newsletter out to you. Please use the application attached to the back of this newsletter as it aides in our bookkeeping. Thanks.

**REPEATER AUTOPATCH CODES TO CHANGE 2-1-01**

Please note that on Thursday February 1<sup>st</sup> the 145.31 repeater autopatch access codes will be changed. Only 2001 members will be provided with these new codes. Additionally, all autodial slots for expired members will be cleared at this time. Please don't wait until the last moment to renew. As always autodial slots are available to all members on a first come first served basis. There is no additional fee for this service. If you would like an autodial slot be sure to see Tony KE3ED.

**B.V.A.R.A. CHRISTMAS PARTY**

It sure was cold but boy did we have a great time at our recent Christmas Party held at Hoss's Restaurant in Moon Twp. Those who braved the cold were not disappointed. The meal was wonderful as well as the fellowship and good time. Thanks to Debbie KB3EAQ and Phyllis N3KUG for organizing such a great time!

**HAM OF THE YEAR!!**

Congratulations go to Dave Heim KA3SMF for becoming this past year's Ham of the Year! Dave was presented with his award by our President, Stan Riffle N3OJN, at our annual Christmas Party. Some of Dave's activities this year include continued work as Chief Engineer of our repeaters as well as Web Master of our new Club webpage. For 2001 Dave has also agreed to join the Club Board of Directors by taking a position as Trustee. Thanks Dave for a great job in 2000.

**CLUB WEBPAGE**

Don't forget to check out the Club's new webpage located on the Internet at [www.geocities.com/the\\_bvara](http://www.geocities.com/the_bvara). It is constantly being updated with new information.

**2001 B.V.A.R.A. VE TEST SCHEDULE****B.V.A.R.A. QRM**

In 2001 The B.V.A.R.A. will again actively sponsor VE testing at the C.C.B.C. Aviation Science Building located at 125 Cessna Drive, Beaver Falls (Chippewa Twp.), PA. Time of exams will be 10:00 AM unless otherwise indicated. Dates for 2001 are as follows: 02-03-01, 04-07-01, 06-02-01, 08-04-01, 10-06-01, & 12-01-01. You may notice that these dates fall on the first Saturday of every even numbered month.

This year the location of our test sessions can be viewed via APRS on 144.390 MHz.

Please note that the new test fees will be \$10.00 this year.

**==>ARISS INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS MEET**

The Amateur Radio on the International Space Station—or ARISS--international partners are meeting this weekend at Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. The three-day session will update current status of the ARISS program and attempt to map its future direction.

Expected to be on hand will be ARISS delegates from the US, Russia, Germany, Belgium, Canada, Japan and Italy, in addition to representatives of NASA, AMSAT-NA, TAPR and the Mir Amateur Radio EXperiment group, MAREX-NA.

Space Amateur Radio EXperiment (SAREX) Working Group Chairman Roy Neal, K6DUE, will serve as meeting moderator. ARISS rules and bylaws development and ratification tops the list of discussion items this weekend.

The Expedition 1 crew of Commander William "Shep" Shepherd, KD5GSL, and Russian cosmonauts Sergei Krikalev, U5MIR, and Yuri Gidzenko has been aboard the ISS since November 2. With about three months left in its tour of duty, the crew has been extremely busy with its normal work schedule. Crew members did take time in mid-November to check out the initial amateur station gear aboard the ISS. On November 17, Shepherd enjoyed a few casual QSOs with earthbound hams.

ARISS spokesman Will Marchant, KC6ROL, says the crew has used Amateur Radio for personal contacts with family members but that crew members have been too pressed for time to engage in casual contacts. In addition, the shuttle Endeavour launched November 30 carrying huge solar arrays to the ISS.

Marchant said he hopes ARISS can ramp up the level of school and casual contacts after the first of the year. A tentative schedule of school contacts is pending. The topic of future contacts between ISS crew members and students is on the agenda for this weekend's meeting. The delegates will look at how school contacts can be smoothly integrated into the ISS crew schedules and how often they will occur. They'll also attempt to come up with an equitable system for the international partners to select schools for ARISS QSOs.

ARISS delegates also will be looking ahead to the next phase of Amateur Radio hardware on the ISS. Right now, the initial station gear consists of low-power VHF and UHF hand-held transceivers. As currently configured aboard the Zarya Functional Cargo Block, the gear provides 2-meter FM and packet capability, although the packet system has not yet been activated. Marchant said ARISS needs to make sure the packet system operation will not interfere with the regular 143-MHz communication channel between the ISS and Earth.

Marchant says the most immediate and pressing hardware projects are to install the German "digitalker" system and to move ahead with a plan to deploy Slow-Scan TV aboard the ISS.

A German proposal to upgrade the initial station gear with a so-called "transportable station" mobile transceiver offering more power and flexibility also will come under scrutiny. Deployment of the next phase of ARISS gear probably will not happen until 2002, Marchant said.

More information about ARISS and SAREX, is at <http://ariss.gsfc.nasa.gov/>.

### **==>PRESIDENT SIGNS CB ENFORCEMENT BILL**

President Bill Clinton has signed legislation that permits the enforcement of certain FCC Citizens Band regulations by state and local governments. Amateur Radio operators are exempt from the provisions of the law, now PL 106-521.

Congressional lawmakers saw the measure as a way to give a voice to those experiencing radio frequency interference resulting from illegal CB radio operation. The FCC will not yield its authority to regulate Citizens Band or other radio services, however.

In short, the measure authorizes states and localities to enact laws that prohibit the use of unauthorized CB equipment--consistent with FCC regulations. This would include the use of high-power linear amplifiers or equipment that was not FCC-certificated.

FCC-licensed stations in any radio service--including the Amateur Service--are excluded from such state or local enforcement, and state or local laws enacted under this legislation must identify this exemption.

The bill--HR.2346 is the House version; it was S.2767 in the Senate--actually is the old Senate "Feingold bill" from several sessions ago. The bill's sponsor, Rep Vernon Ehlers of Michigan says local hams asked him to support the bill because of the bad rap they were getting from illegal CBers using high-power linear amplifiers that resulted in TV and telephone interference while the CBers involved hid behind federal preemption.

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As did Feingold before him, Ehlers asked the ARRL to review his measure to ensure that it would not unintentionally harm Amateur Radio.

A copy of the new legislation is available on the ARRL Web site at <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2000/11/29/3/cbbill.html>.

### **==>ARES/RACES ACTIVATED AS BUFFALO IS BRIEFLY BURIED**

They say that when it rains it pours--or, in the case of the upstate New York snow belt recently, when it snows, it snows! The Erie County Amateur Radio Emergency Service and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service found themselves literally snowed under just before Thanksgiving when more than two feet of "lake effect" snow covered the greater Buffalo area like a big, heavy winter blanket. More than two dozen amateurs volunteered to help their community through the severe weather that struck November 20.

Karl Weir, N2NJH--who's ARES Western New York District Emergency Coordinator and RACES Officer for Erie County--activated an emergency net, and an informational net was brought up on another area repeater.

"At this point, the City of Buffalo and suburbs of Amherst, Cheektowaga and Lancaster had received 24.3 inches of snow in less than 24 hours," Weir said. Traffic was at a standstill, and hundreds--perhaps thousands--of schoolchildren found themselves stranded on buses, while many others were still stuck at their schools.

"Dave [Quagliana], K2MTW, was one of the teachers stranded with about 30-plus students at Buffalo Public School #28 who checked into our net," Weir said.

By Monday evening, Buffalo and Erie County were declared disaster areas, and motorists were banned from the roads as first-response emergency crews hit the highways. Stranded school buses were evacuated, and several shelters were opened.

ARES was activated at 7:30 Tuesday morning in Erie County. Because he was snowbound, Assistant Emergency Coordinator and RACES Officer Eugene Kremzier, N2OBW, had to handle net control duties from his home. Weir says Erie County emergency services activated RACES with a specific request to garner as many 4x4 vehicles as possible and to establish a ham station at the county emergency operations center.

With a station established at the EOC, Weir said, "our first order of business was to take Red Cross people to examine the shelters and make any critical deliveries of food and medication."

The Millard Fillmore Hospital was happy to accept the assistance of three ham-driven 4x4s and an additional ham volunteer to assist in transporting medical staff, Weir said. In addition, he escorted Red Cross officials delivering medications to stranded residents.

By 4:30 on the afternoon of November 21, road crews had begun to open up major highways in the affected area to remove abandoned vehicles. And ARES and RACES stood down at the end of a very long Tuesday.

Winter doesn't arrive until December 21, but Buffalo will be ready.

#### **==>MICHIGAN HAM AGREES TO HF SUSPENSION; OHIO HAM FACES HEARING**

The FCC says Amateur Extra licensee Michael E. Guernsey, ND8V, of Kalamazoo, Michigan, has agreed to a nine-month suspension of his HF privileges, starting January 1. FCC Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth said that if Guernsey does not violate FCC rules or the license modification agreement, the FCC will clear his file of past complaints in any future enforcement action against his license.

The action came in the wake of allegations that the licensee had caused deliberate interference on 20 meters "particularly communications of Hispanic operators and truckers when you perceived them to have an improperly 'wide' SSB signal or a signal which in your opinion exhibited excessive microphone gain," Hollingsworth said. The FCC also cited allegations that the licensee may have used profanity and obscenity on the air, that he may not have identified by call sign, and that he might have deliberately interfered with communications on the Maritime Mobile Service Net.

Meanwhile, the FCC has told General licensee Jeffrey J. Pipenur, WA8IKW, of Vandalia, Ohio, that it's poised to designate his station license for a revocation or renewal hearing and his operator's license for suspension. The FCC cited monitoring information and "complaints before the Commission" alleging that Pipenur "deliberately interfered" with other amateur communications on 75 meters. Further such complaints could lead to a hearing, Hollingsworth told Pipenur. Last March 1, after considering Pipenur's response to earlier FCC allegations of "deliberate interference, poor Amateur practice, and operation contrary to" FCC rules, the FCC set aside his renewal grant and renewed his license for one year. In his response, the FCC said, Pipenur did not deny the activity, apologized, and consented to the short-term renewal.

#### **==>FORMER FLASH COMM SEEKS TO EXPAND HF MESSAGING SYSTEM**

The FCC is seeking comments by December 18 on a proposal to expand a nationwide, commercial two-way short-data

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messaging system it authorized on a conditional basis three years ago. Terion Inc--formerly known as Flash Comm Inc--has filed with the FCC to modify its conditional authorization. The company also seeks to obtain "a renewal expectancy."

The company has filed an application to modify station WPKU683 in the Business Radio Service. In July 1997, the FCC's Wireless Telecommunications Bureau conditionally granted authority to Flash Comm Inc to construct and operate--on a secondary basis--a nationwide, commercial two-way short-data messaging system that operated in the 3-30 MHz range, subject to certain conditions. The frequencies the system uses do not fall in any current ham bands, but some are close, and the ARRL strenuously objected to the plan when it was first proposed. The ARRL plans to file comments this time around as well.

Under the Flash Comm/Terion system, so-called "intelligent transceiver units" are installed on vehicles and structures. Transmitted data enable the service to track the location or monitor the status of each "asset." Transmissions are in short bursts averaging two seconds on HF channels the system selects automatically as being unoccupied.

Terion wants to quadruple the amount of authorized spectrum. It also wants the FCC to approve increasing the total HF energy transmitted each day, also by a factor of four and jump the aggregate transmissions per hour from one percent to four percent.

The company says it wants to "obtain a renewal expectancy in the event it provides a showing of substantial service" prior to the expiration of its five-year conditional authorization in order to eliminate the need for a separate rulemaking proceeding.

Comments on the requests are due by December 18, 2000. Reply comments are due by January 2, 2001. Commenters should reference DA-00-2600.

#### **==>FCC TO ACCEPT INTERNET DATA TO IDENTIFY SILENT KEYS**

The FCC now is prepared to accept a printout from an Internet Web site as sufficient proof of death to cancel a license in the Amateur Service. The FCC will continue to accept death certificates and published obituaries, and now can accept multiple cancellation requests.

According to a spokesperson in the FCC Licensing and Technical Analysis Branch in Gettysburg, the FCC now can accept a printed copy of information appearing on the Internet as adequate proof of death "provided the printout contains certain, verifiable, information." The Licensing Bureau also will accept a list--with supporting documentation--of multiple requests for cancellation of amateur licenses.

"It's basically no different than us taking requests today, other than a person can now send multiple cancels in one request and can also send documentation printed from a reliable Web site," the Licensing Branch spokesperson said. "We still require the same information."

According to information on the FCC's vanity Web site, <http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/amateur/vnityfaq.html>, individuals can report the death of a licensee by submitting a signed request for license grant cancellation accompanied by a copy of an obituary or death certificate to the Licensing Branch. The FCC says it's been able to match up the name, address and birth date of the deceased included on some submittals it's received via the Ancestry.com site (<http://www.ancestry.com>) on the Internet. "The validity of these printouts as proof of death is equal to the same level of sufficiency as an obituary, in terms of reducing the risk of the inadvertent cancellation of a valid amateur call sign," the FCC spokesperson said.

#### **==>FCC SEEKS TO REQUIRE FCC REGISTRATION NUMBER**

The FCC has proposed requiring that everyone it does business with obtain and use an FCC Registration Number--or FRN. Many amateurs registered with the Universal Licensing System already have been assigned a 10-digit FRN by the Commission Registration System--or CORES. The FCC has not made FRN use mandatory, however. The FCC released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (MD Docket 00-205) December 1.

The FCC says requiring individuals and entities to obtain an FRN will help it to better track and manage the collection of fees. The FCC proposes requiring that FRNs be provided with any filings that require payment of a fee, such as the vanity fee for amateurs.

The FCC is proposing to reject filings requiring an FRN that do not include the number. The Commission said its proposed rules "would make the use of the FRN mandatory in certain circumstances so that anyone not yet assigned an FRN or who has not yet obtained one must obtain one."

An individual does not have to hold an FCC license to obtain an FRN. The FCC says the information collected by CORES includes the "entity name and type," Taxpayer Identification Number or TIN--typically a Social Security Number for an individual, contact address and e-mail address. CORES information is not made public.

Comments on the FCC rulemaking notice are due 30 days from the date of publication in The Federal Register. Reply comments are due by 45 days from the date of publication.

The FCC began implementing CORES earlier this year. CORES registration eventually will replace Universal Licensing System, or ULS, registration. The FRN will co-

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exist with the Licensee ID Number issued by the ULS, an FCC spokesperson said this week.

More information on CORES is available on the FCC Web site, <http://www.fcc.gov> (click on the CORES registration link).

#### **==>FIRST ARISS SCHOOL CONTACT SET!**

Students at the Luther Burbank School in Burbank, Illinois, will get a chance to speak with the crew of Space Station Alpha later this month. Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) spokesman Will Marchant, KC6ROL, says the contact will take place on Monday, December 18 starting at around 2202 UTC. If that doesn't work, they'll try again on Tuesday, December 19 starting at around 2100 UTC. The contact is expected to last about 10 minutes.

"The ISS downlink is on the 145.80 MHz 'public' frequency," Marchant said. Efforts are under way to set up a Webcast of the occasion. SAREX veteran and professional engineer Charlie Sufana, AJ9N, will be in charge of the Amateur Radio setup at the school.

The Burbank School, located on the southwest side of Chicago, has a population of 700 pupils in kindergarten through eighth grade. Another 18 schools are under consideration for ARISS school contacts.

Burbank teacher Rita Wright says word of the impending ARISS contact has generated a flurry of educational activities at the school. "Since being notified of our ISS contact, our teachers and students have been very busy with space, space station, and space exploration topics and activities," said Wright, who's the eighth-grade science and math teacher. "Our school is vibrating with excitement and activity."

#### **==>AO-40 ACTIVATES S-BAND TELEMETRY; TESTING CONTINUES**

AMSAT News Service reports that general AO-40 housekeeping tasks continue as ground stations test the complex systems onboard the next-generation Amateur Radio satellite. Magnetorquing operations also continue, prior to moving the new satellite to its final orbit. Launched November 16, AO-40--formerly Phase 3D--for now remains in a geostationary transfer orbit.

North American P3D Command Station operator Stacey Mills, W4SM, reports an S-band (2.4 GHz) transmitter has been activated and has been sending 400 b/s BPSK telemetry. The satellite will transmit S-band telemetry only at certain times, such as when reasonable squint angle and visibility are available. Doppler correction at this frequency and at this point in the orbit will be dramatic, he said. The 2-meter transmitter (145.898 MHz) will remain on during S-band operation. Information on PSK demodulators is available

from AMSAT-NA at  
<http://www.amsat.org/amsat/sats/ao40/ao40-tlm.html>.

There's been no word on when or whether AMSAT and the AO-40 ground controllers will permit a limited period of general amateur operation while the satellite is still in the geostationary transfer orbit. AO-40 is the largest Amateur Radio satellite ever put into space.

### **==>TAXIS IN SPACE, 20-METER TICKS CHALLENGE INTRUDER WATCHERS**

Interference to the AO-27, UO-14, SO-35 and possibly other Amateur Radio satellites tentatively has been traced to taxi fleet transmissions from south of the US border. "The stations appear to be unlicensed Mexican taxi operators operating in the satellite uplink portion of the band," said Brennan Price, N4QX, of the ARRL Monitoring System. AMSAT News Service reports that severe interference from other allegedly unlicensed Spanish-speaking stations continues on 145.850 and 145.825 MHz and transmissions were being picked up by UO-14 and SO-35.

"Since VHF signals don't go so far, except via satellite, finding these folks is tough," Price said.

IARU Region 2 Monitoring System Coordinator Martin Potter, VE3OAT, reports that one signal source in Mexico that was interfering with the AO-27 uplink was located, thanks to intervention from FMRE, the Mexican IARU society. FMRE reported the situation to COFETEL, the Mexican telecommunications authority. COFETEL made the taxi drivers move away from the AO-27 uplink, but taxi operations continue on other 2-meter frequencies, and AO-27 was still experiencing similar interference at last report.

Meanwhile, the FCC tentatively has identified a mysterious "tick-tick" intruder signal as the third harmonic of an ocean current-sensing radar near Atlantic City run by Rutgers University. The FCC directed the licensee to eliminate the harmonic but did not order the transmitter shut down. The transmitter manufacturer has since installed a low-pass filter to eliminate the interference. The "tick" showed up from 14.275 to 14.381 MHz.

The typical signal of the experimental Rutgers radar system is 25 kHz wide. While the tick was audible, it did not present significant interference to amateurs.

### **==>ARRL'S "RADIOS ON-LINE" SERVICE NOW FREE TO MEMBERS**

Listing a classified ad to buy and sell Amateur Radio-related equipment on the ARRL's Radios On-Line service now is free to League members. Listings will continue to be available for viewing by everyone, but now that Radios On-Line is an ARRL membership benefit, only League members may post ads.

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ARRL members now will be able to post free ads up to 100 words--subject to a few rules. Members first must register for access to the ARRL members-only pages and be logged on as a member in order to post ads. Classifieds listed on Radios On-Line will remain posted for 30 days unless canceled earlier.

Radios On-Line is for noncommercial, personal use. There are no provisions for nonmembers to post classified advertising. The service provides for listings in more than two dozen categories. Members may list ads seeking or selling Amateur Radio-related equipment. The site includes a search engine to look for specific items.

The ARRL does not warrant any items advertised on Radios On-Line, nor are individual advertisers subject to scrutiny. The ARRL reserves the right, at its discretion, to decline a listing or to discontinue an ad without prior notice.

### **==>AO-40, WHERE ARE YOU? SATELLITE'S BEACON GOES SILENT**

AMSAT reports there's a problem aboard AO-40. The Amateur Radio satellite has not been heard from since December 13, and for the AO-40 ground crew the silence is deafening. AMSAT says the AO-40 development team is looking into the problem, but it might not have any answers until December 16. That's when the onboard computer is expected to automatically reset itself and, it's hoped, restart the beacon transmission.

"All we know is we've got a problem," said AMSAT-NA President Robin Haighton, VE3FRH. "I've got all my toes and fingers crossed." Haighton said the problem may or may not be related to earlier difficulties getting AO-40's 400-Newton motor to fire properly. Ground controllers adjusted the satellite's orbit earlier this week, but as a result of fuel-valve problems, AO-40 ended up in a higher-than-planned orbit.

Monday's orbit-adjusting burn lasted three minutes longer than planned, sending AO-40 into a 60,000 km (37,200 mile) apogee rather than the planned 50,000 km (31,000 miles).

AMSAT reports that 2-meter telemetry transmissions from AO-40 stopped early Wednesday, December 13, while work on the 400-Newton propulsion system was in progress. "A lot of people are putting their heads together," Haighton said, but until the telemetry transmission reappears, not much will be known. "It's very frustrating," he said.

Earlier AMSAT reports indicated that the onboard IHU-2 computer could be responsible for the missing telemetry. The IHU-2 has suffered several crashes, and when the computer goes down, so does the telemetry, although a weak, unmodulated carrier should remain. Haighton said the IHU-2 takes a couple of days to time out and reboot, "and then we're in business, we hope."

Monitors around the world are listening for any signal from AO-40. Maxim Memorial Station W1AW and other amateurs have reported hearing a weak, unmodulated carrier on the 145.898 MHz beacon frequency since the telemetry stopped. It's not known for sure if the signals are coming from AO-40, however.

AMSAT says onboard software events set to occur Saturday afternoon are programmed to start a spacecraft emergency routine called "command-assist" that attempts to re-establish communication. Once communication is re-established, AMSAT says, ground controllers will have their best chance to recover any evidence of the incident that made the telemetry transmissions stop.

In the meantime, it's a tense waiting game. "If we knew where the beacon was, we wouldn't have a problem," Haighton said.

The next-generation Amateur Radio satellite formerly known as Phase 3D was launched in mid-November. For more information on AO-40, visit the AMSAT-NA Web site, <http://www.amsat.org>.

#### **==>ARISS PINS DOWN DATE, TIME FOR FIRST SCHOOL CONTACT**

Tuesday, December 19, will be a banner day at Luther Burbank Elementary School in Burbank, Illinois. The Amateur Radio on the International Space Station--or ARISS--program has announced that a dozen youngsters at the Burbank School will be the first to get a chance to talk to the ISS Expedition 1 crew via Amateur Radio. The approximately 10-minute pass will start at around 2100 UTC--or around 3 PM Central Time.

ARISS had announced two possible dates late last week. Getting the schedule pinned down was not easy. "With multiple spacewalks, and lots of repairs on the ISS, the schedulers and crews have been extremely busy," said ARISS spokesperson Will Marchant, KC6ROL. With space shuttle Endeavour back on Earth, NASA was able to turn its attention to working out a schedule for the contact.

SAREX/ARISS veteran mentor Charlie Sufana, AJ9N, who's in charge of setting up the Amateur Radio station at the Chicago-area school, said he, several other amateurs, a few parents and the school's principal installed two antennas on the school's roof over the past weekend. Sufana said this week that recent heavy snow in the Chicago area was helping to keep the temporary antennas in place.

The ISS downlink will be on 145.80 MHz. Marchant says efforts are under way to set up a Web cast of the occasion.

The Burbank School is located on the southwest side of Chicago and has a population of 700 pupils in kindergarten

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through eighth grade. Another 18 schools are under consideration for ARISS school contacts.

Burbank teacher Rita Wright says she and her colleagues have been incorporating ISS and space-related themes into the curriculum and have developed a Burbank School/ISS "mission patch."

More information about requesting dedicated contacts is available on the ARISS web pages, <http://ariss.gsfc.nasa.gov/>.

#### **==>FCC OPENS DOOR TO INCREASED TEST FEES FOR 2001**

The FCC has suspended its regulatory limit on the reimbursement fee for Amateur Radio examinations, and the ARRL VEC says a new \$10 test fee will go into effect January 1. An FCC Public Notice released December 4 explained that the Commission did not plan to announce a maximum reimbursement fee for 2001 since the requirement to do so no longer appears in the Communications Act.

For now, the FCC says, it will suspend enforcement of the fee provision, §97.527(b), which continues to appear in the FCC rules. Some, if not all, of the nation's other Volunteer Examiner Coordinators are expected to follow suit, although at least one VEC charges no test fee whatsoever.

ARRL VEC Manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ, says the ARRL VEC's current fee of \$6.65 was based on the provision in the Communications Act, adopted in 1984, that established a \$4 cap on reimbursement of out-of-pocket costs with an annual adjustment based on the Consumer Price Index. The new, higher fee reflects the fact that the ARRL VEC is doing more of the work on behalf of the FCC than was originally envisioned when the provision was included in the Communications Act. That effort includes data entry for all new and upgrade license applications once done by FCC staffers.

ARRL VEC volunteer examiners will continue to charge applicants \$6.65 through the end of 2000.

#### **==>AO-40 FAILS TO PHONE HOME**

AMSAT OSCAR-40 remains silent, and command stations on the ground still have been unable to reestablish contact with the Amateur Radio satellite. It was hoped that onboard computer timeouts--so-called "command-assist" software watchdog routines--would restart the beacon telemetry and give the ground crew some clues as to why AO-40 suddenly stopped transmitting on December 13. That did not happen.

"There were no observations, and command stations tried to re-establish communication by sending blind commands," AMSAT-DL's Peter Guelzow, DB2OS, of the AO-40 team, said after the first watchdog routine date passed December 16.



A second watchdog date of December 21 also passed without any apparent reset.

The second reset would have cycled the satellite through various receive, transmit, and antenna modes. Guelzow said the watchdog routines only will work if the onboard computer software has not crashed.

When and whether the satellite will be heard from again depends, in part, on whether AO-40 has picked up any of the "blind commands" sent by ground controllers. If AO-40 did pick up some commands, Guelzow said, the command-assist watchdog would be reset for another 10 orbits. That could extend the wait until Christmas.

Ground controllers want to avoid doing a hard re-boot of the main computer. "If the IHU has crashed, then a reset command can be issued from the ground," Guelzow said. "This would be the last resort." He said ground controllers will thoroughly check out and analyze all other possibilities before issuing a hard reset command. "There is no need to hurry, and the command team doesn't want to miss any option," he said.

The AO-40 team is continuing to investigate reports of weak signals on the 2-meter downlink frequency of 145.898 MHz that seem to be coming from AO-40, but it has discounted reports of telemetry heard there as a hoax. Other reports persist of a weak, unmodulated carrier, however.

Guelzow said the AO-40 team was encouraged by a report from the North American Aerospace Defense Command--NORAD--indicating that AO-40 was in one piece, that the orbit was exactly where it should be, and that the radar cross-section was as expected. Guelzow said the NORAD data counter rumors that AO-40 might have exploded.

Guelzow also has found himself fending off criticisms that AO-40 was launched with known problems in the helium valves that control fuel flow to the onboard 400-Newton propulsion system. "There were no known problems," Guelzow said in a posting to the AMSAT bulletin board. He said a valve which seemed not to operate correctly during ground testing was sent back to its US manufacturer and repaired.

Guelzow said the valve and pressure regulator worked perfectly during pre-launch testing. "All other subsystems worked perfectly, including the 70-cm TX," he said.

#### **==>ARRL SEEKS FCC REVIEW, REVERSAL OF WIRELESS BUREAU PRB-1 DENIAL**

The ARRL is asking the full FCC to review part of an FCC Order that declined to include CC&Rs--covenants, conditions and restrictions--under the limited federal preemption known as PRB-1. Imposed by private homeowners' associations or by developers, CC&Rs--also known as "restrictive covenants" or

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"deed restrictions"--often impede or prohibit the installation of outside antennas.

"ARRL's petition relative to the application of its PRB-1 policy to private land use regulations has not, to date, been afforded a thorough review or a fair analysis," the ARRL said in its Application for Review, filed December 15. The ARRL maintains that the FCC should have the same interest in the effective performance of an Amateur Radio station and in the promotion of amateur communications regardless of whether the licensee's property is privately or publicly regulated.

In November, FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Deputy Chief Kathleen O'Brien Ham--acting under "delegated authority"--turned down an ARRL Petition for Reconsideration that--among other things--called on the FCC to declare that PRB-1 applies to amateurs governed by CC&Rs or condominium regulations just as it does to hams regulated solely by local zoning laws. The ARRL now wants the full Commission to review--and reverse--O'Brien Ham's decision.

The ARRL has argued that since PRB-1 was promulgated in 1985, the FCC has made it clear that it has Congressional authority to prohibit restrictive covenants that could keep property owners and even renters from installing antennas to receive TV, satellite and similar signals. The same principle applies to Amateur Radio, the ARRL asserted.

The FCC cannot use the private contractual nature of covenants "as a justification for the arbitrary and disparate treatment of radio amateurs similarly situated," the League said.

The ARRL made it clear, however, that it's not seeking any kind of preferential treatment from homeowners' associations, architectural committees or condominium boards. "It would be entirely consistent with PRB-1, for example, for a homeowners association to permit only a relatively small antenna in a planned community, such as a backyard, ground-mounted vertical antenna or one of the small Yagi configurations similar to an outdoor television antenna," the ARRL said.

The ARRL said that since the FCC already has jurisdiction to apply PRB-1 to all types of land-use regulation and has said it's willing to "encourage" private land-use authorities to apply PRB-1, "there is no legal or policy reason for continuing the distinction" between private and public land-use regulation with respect to amateur antennas. The ARRL asserts that Amateur Radio operators should be able to negotiate "reasonable accommodation" provisions with local homeowner's associations just as they now may do with governmental land-use regulators.

Many amateurs now say it's impossible to find desirable housing that comes without CC&Rs. The League's Regulatory Information Branch reports that the topic of restrictive



covenants and antennas is one of the most frequently raised by members contacting the ARRL for information.

A copy of the ARRL's Application for Review is available on ARRLWeb at <http://www.arrl.org/announce/regulatory/prb-1/prb1afr.html>

### **==>ARISS SUCCESS! ILLINOIS KIDS ENJOY HAM RADIO SPACE CHAT**

It was a historic moment for Amateur Radio. Several hundred youngsters, teachers, parents, and news media representatives were on hand at Luther Burbank Elementary School near Chicago December 21 for the first successful Amateur Radio on the International Space Station school contact.

The third time was indeed the charm, as several pupils plus one teacher got to chat with Space Station Alpha Commander William "Shep" Shepherd, KD5GSL, via ham radio. Earlier attempts to contact Shepherd on December 19 had not worked out, despite the extensive technical preparations.

On December 21, however, Shepherd, using the special NAISS call sign, came right back to a call from veteran SAREX/ARISS mentor Charlie Sufana, AJ9N, at the school. Braving repeated snowstorms and frigid temperatures, Sufana and his ARISS team had spent the better part of two weeks setting up gear and antennas for the scheduled contact. The effort paid off.

"I'm happy that we were able to pull it off," Sufana said. "The kids were bouncing off the walls."

During the 10-minute pass, 14 first through eighth graders plus science and math teacher Rita Wright got a chance to pose questions about life aboard Space Station Alpha to Shepherd.

"I think the most favorite thing about being on space station is just the ability to float around in space," Shepherd said in response to one student's question. "It's like you're not moving at all. You're just like in a pool and you can move anywhere you want, but there's no water in it."

Shepherd said the crew is keeping detailed logs about life on the space station. He said the crew was enjoying taking pictures of Earth from space, "because you can see things that you can't see from the ground."

At the conclusion of the successful contact, the grateful crowd applauded loudly and offered up a hearty "thank you!" and "73!" to Shepherd and his Russian crewmates. Shepherd signed off by saying that he enjoyed the chat and was looking forward to more school QSOs with youngsters around the country. Another two dozen schools are under consideration for ARISS school contacts. Schools in Virginia and New York are tentatively scheduled for contacts next month.

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### **SAN FRANCISCO HAM LOSES ALL BUT HF CW PRIVILEGES FOR TWO YEARS**

San Francisco amateur licensee Danny Kenwood, WA6CNQ, has again come in for FCC enforcement action. In an unusual enforcement twist, the FCC has modified Kenwood's General ticket to prohibit all amateur operation but HF Morse for a period of two years.

Kenwood lost his VHF and UHF privileges for 90 days in October 1999 following allegations of profanity, obscenity, and deliberate interference directed at users of the K7IJ Grizzly Peak repeater and of failure to properly identify. Last spring, the FCC issued a Warning Notice to Kenwood on the basis of reports from the K7IJ repeater system control operator that the repeater had to be shut down due to Kenwood's alleged "interference and harassment to other operators on the repeater system."

According to a December 5 letter to Kenwood from FCC Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth, Kenwood voluntarily agreed to the HF CW-only modification, which begins November 30 and continues through November 2002. The prohibition extends to Kenwood's operation of any other amateur station as well as to operation of his own station by himself or anyone else.

Hollingsworth told Kenwood that if he violates FCC rules or the terms of the agreement, the FCC will initiate revocation and suspension proceedings against Kenwood and could also levy a fine.

### **==>WILLEM VAN TUIJL, FAMILY HOPEFUL FOLLOWING SURGERY IN US**

Willem van Tuijl, the boy wounded during a pirate attack off the coast of South America earlier this year, is back home in the Netherlands after a short visit to the US for additional surgery. Willem, 13, and his parents, Jacco and Jannie van Tuijl, KH2TD and KH2TE, now are looking forward to Christmas.

The van Tuijls had been sailing around the world when the attack occurred last March. The Amateur Radio community rallied on 20 meters in response to Jacco van Tuijl's frantic call for help following the incident. Several amateurs assisted the family in keeping the badly wounded teenager alive as they sailed for a safe harbor in Honduras.

Through the efforts of ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, Willem was transported to the US for further surgery and rehabilitation. The youth was paralyzed from the waist down as a result of his injuries, however. The van Tuijls returned to the Netherlands in June.

Willem and his family quietly returned to the US in early November so he could undergo advanced nerve-graft surgery that might help restore the proper function of some of his

internal organs. "They don't know what the outcome will be," Jacco van Tuijl told the ARRL.

In a bold move, Van Tuijl said, surgeons at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, took nerves from both of Willem's legs and attempted to graft them between the severed nerves. It's the first time such a procedure has been attempted, and it will be several months before it's known whether the surgery was at all successful.

Van Tuijl said the best possible outcome of the 18-hour-long operation would be a return of Willem's ability to flex his hip and knee joints—something that could tremendously improve his quality of life. Just as important could be the restoration of Willem's bladder and bowel function as a result of the repair.

Many of the expenses of the surgical visit were paid for out of the Willem Fund, established after the youth came to the US for additional medical treatment. Neurosurgeons James Guest and Bart Green and other assisting physicians donated their services, van Tuijl said.

Van Tuijl said his son was now back in the equivalent of middle school in the Netherlands. "He seems to be doing pretty well," van Tuijl said. "He's been taking good care of himself." Jacco van Tuijl now is working in the Gulf of Mexico on a vessel that lays pipelines, and he occasionally gets on the air from his ship to talk with friends.

An article about Willem appears in People magazine's year-end issue.

### **==>RESET RESTORES AO-40 TRANSMISSION**

Merry Christmas, AMSAT--AO-40 is back! Following a 12-day silence, AO-40 once again is transmitting telemetry. In response to an L-band command sent

Christmas Day by command station ZL1AOX, AO-40 resumed transmitting on 2.4GHz. Software was reloaded to permit telemetry transmissions on 2401.305 MHz. Some problems remain on the satellite, however.

"Recovery of AO-40 continues, and some housekeeping tasks were performed by the command stations to improve and stabilize the situation," said Peter Guelzow, DB2OS, of the AO-40 team. Guelzow says new software routines were loaded successfully to restore the battery-charge regulator system and other housekeeping functions. "We will now start a detailed analysis of the situation," he said.

Telemetry transmissions from AO-40 ceased December 13 while ground controllers were testing the onboard 400-Newton propulsion system following an initial orbital shift. Some observers feared the satellite had been irreparably damaged. Guelzow says ground stations now have regained control of the satellite. Ground controllers hope the telemetry might yield some clues about what went wrong aboard the satellite to make it stop transmitting.

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After onboard software watchdog routines failed to restart beacon transmissions automatically, a full reset command and an initialization block to switch on the S2 S-band transmitter were sent via L-band.

Guelzow said telemetry revealed that some temperature sensors have failed and some current sensors indicated incorrect values, but solar sensors seemed to be working fine. The good news was that AO-40's power situation--in particular the battery voltages--looks nominal.

Guelzow said additional software would be loaded in the next few days and the various uplinks checked out before any attempts are made to turn the 2-meter transmitter back on. "Clearly, we need more time to analyze and understand what has happened here," Guelzow said. He said that while there are no indications that the 2-meter beacon transmitter has failed, ground controllers don't want to risk losing communication again. "So for the next days the spacecraft will continue to be transmitting on S-Band only," he said.

Phase 3D Project Leader Karl Meinzer, DJ4ZC said AO-40 command stations "will continue to follow a conservative philosophy" with a primary goal of not causing additional damage while retaining as much evidence as possible to analyze what made the beacon transmissions stop.

On December 22, AMSAT proposed holding an inquiry into the incident that led to the loss of communication with AO-40. A letter from AMSAT-NA President Robin Haighton, VE3FRH, said "AMSAT believes that it is in the best interests of our organization to determine all the facts surrounding this incident and to make sure that a similar situation cannot happen again either on AO-40 or on a future satellite."

### **==>HAMS HELP CONTINUES IN ICE STORM EMERGENCY**

Ice storms this week have caused power and telephone outages and hazardous driving conditions in Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma, and more bad weather was on the way. Amateur Radio Emergency Service nets have been activated on HF and on local repeaters to handle emergency traffic and to support public safety and relief agencies. Several deaths have been attributed to the severe weather.

President Clinton has declared a state of emergency in Oklahoma and Arkansas. At week's end, hundreds of thousands still were without power, and many still had no telephone service--even cellular systems were out. Utility companies were saying it might be a week or longer before power could be restored.

Hams also have been locating and assisting the many stranded motorists. South Texas Section Manager Ray Taylor, N5NAV, says an estimated 200 Texas hams have been pitching in. At one point, ARES members helped with

communication after hospital telephones were knocked out; they also got a generator going after one hospital's emergency power system failed.

Hams also have been supporting relief activities of the Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the Baptist Men's Kitchen as well as state police. The Red Cross has opened shelters to assist those stranded by the inclement weather or left without utilities.

At Taylor's urging, the FCC asked the amateur community to cooperate in recognizing the existence of a voluntary communications emergency and to stay clear of 3870 to 3878 kHz to accommodate the Texas ARES Net. The Net has been on 7285 kHz during daylight hours. Taylor said he requested the voluntary declaration because the nighttime emergency and tactical traffic net frequency on 3873 kHz was being subjected to apparent intentional QRM.

Taylor said Thursday that his latest concern was possible flooding in South Texas from runoff in the north and west. Hams were preparing to monitor levels on several rivers in that part of the state, he said.

In Arkansas, Amateur Radio reportedly served as the only link between the state capital and DeQueen, a city in southwestern Arkansas that was particularly hard hit by the latest ice storm. The state suffered another ice storm in mid-December. Arkansas Section Manager Roger Gray, N5QS, says a TV report credited Amateur Radio with facilitating communication between Gov Mike Huckabee and the mayor of DeQueen. Residents in up to a dozen counties reportedly have lost power, telephone service and water.

At week's end, the storm that affected the US Southwest was moving eastward and expected to join another system to create blizzard conditions in the Northeast.

### **==>NEW FCC SYSTEM MEANS QUICK LICENSE GRANTS**

The FCC's new system to handle batch-filed amateur applications from Volunteer Examiner Coordinators has cut processing time from hours to minutes. The FCC inaugurated the more rapid amateur license application processing system December 28--slightly ahead of its original schedule.

"Way to go, FCC!" said an enthusiastic ARRL-VEC Manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ, after his office fed its first batch of license applications into the system. Jahnke says five dozen ARRL-VEC applications resulted in license grants about 52 minutes later. The W4VEC in North Carolina and Central America VEC also took advantage of the new system for the first time.

Except for a two-hour window right after midnight each day, the speedy new system looks for VEC submissions each hour on the half hour. With FCC license grant processing now measured in terms of hours instead of days, the major factor

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now determining the time from exam to license grant is how quickly VE teams get their test results to their VECs.

The FCC has been estimating a processing window of up to 90 minutes, depending on volume and arrival time. License grant results should be available immediately on the Universal Licensing System Web site, <http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/uls>, using the license search option.

Applications processed by the FCC one day will appear in the public update ("zip") files the following morning. Public call sign servers on the Internet should be able to update within 24 hours after FCC action—rather than the 48 hours that's been typical.

On-line filings from individuals, weekend filings and FCC-manually processed applications put into the hopper during weekdays at Gettysburg will continue to be handled as have been. These are batched for midnight processing, and weekend filings will not queue up until Monday midnight.

### **==>COLORADO COMPANY TO ACQUIRE ALPHA/POWER**

CrossLink Inc, a Boulder, Colorado, delivery tracking and telemetry company, is expected to acquire the assets of Amateur Radio amplifier manufacturer Alpha/Power Inc. An announcement from Alpha/Power Chairman and CEO Dick Ehrhorn, W0ID, said a buyout agreement would be completed by year's end.

In September Alpha/Power, based in Longmont, Colorado, announced plans to cease engineering and manufacturing operations once its current run of Alpha 87A and 99 amplifiers was completed. Ehrhorn left open the possibility of selling Alpha/Power, provided the right buyer came along.

Under the anticipated agreement, CrossLink (<http://www.crosslinkinc.com/>) will acquire all assets of, and rights to, the Alpha Amateur Radio product line. It's anticipated that production at the CrossLink facility will resume early in 2001.

In a joint statement CrossLink President/CEO Gary Zarlengo, WA0KLP, and Chief Technical Officer Gordon Hardman, KE3D, said they were "very pleased to have the opportunity to continue bringing the world-renowned Alpha name and product line to the amateur radio community." CrossLink will continue to provide full factory warranty and post-warranty service for existing Alpha owners, Zarlengo and Hardman said.

Ehrhorn, formerly W4ETO, founded Ehrhorn Technological Operations in 1970 and designed all the early Alpha linears. He sold ETO several years ago. In 1996, Ehrhorn and Dave Wilson, AA0RS/G3SZA, bought back the Alpha amplifier business from ETO. Alpha/Power purchased the RFConcepts

line of VHF-UHF power amplifiers from Kantronics in late 1998.

A nucleus of Alpha/Power personnel, including Business Vice President Scott Ehrhorn and Customer Service Manager Glenn Pladsen, AE0Q, will join CrossLink. Scott Ehrhorn will become Alpha Product Line Manager, while Pladsen will continue to handle Alpha customer service. According to Hardman, additional space and facilities available at CrossLink will allow ongoing Alpha production at previous rates or greater.

#### ==>IN BRIEF:

**\* Pennsylvania ham snags ISS contact:** It was just a matter of being in the right place at the right time, says ARRL member Randy Shriver, KG3N, of Hanover, Pennsylvania. He managed to snag the first--and so far only--"informal" contact with ISS Expedition 1 crew commander William "Shep" Shepherd, KD5GSL, early on the morning of November 13. "I only had 20 seconds or so," said Shriver. Space Station Alpha was over Newfoundland at the time and had just completed an "engineering pass" contact with NN1SS at Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland when Shriver dropped in a quick call, and Shepherd came back to him using his own call sign. "Well Randy, you are my first contact from the space station," Shepherd responded. A ham for about 20 years, Shriver says he built his station specifically for SAREX contacts (he's got four stacked 22-element arrays and 100 W). In 1985, Shriver worked Tony England, W0ORE, aboard the shuttle Challenger. WGAL-TV, Channel 8 in Lancaster included a report on Shriver's ISS QSO in its newscasts.

**\* QSL postage to remain at 20 cents:** While first-class domestic postage in the US will increase to 34 cents starting January 7, 2001, the cost of mailing a postcard--such as a QSL card--within the US will remain at 20 cents. The governors of the US Postal Service this week announced that the price of a first-class letter will rise to 34 cents, but the cost of each additional first-class ounce will decrease from 22 cents to 21 cents. The new 34 cent letter-rate stamps go on sale December 15. International mailing rates also will rise January 7. An airmail postcard (QSL) will cost 50 cents if bound for Canada or Mexico and 70 cents to anywhere else in the world. For other mail, the basic unit rate has been raised to one ounce--60 cents/ounce for Canada and Mexico; 80 cents elsewhere in the world, meaning users actually will be able to mail more for less. The complete rate schedule is available on the USPS Web site, <http://www.usps.gov/news/2001rate.htm> --USPS news release

**\* ISS Expedition 1 crew's tour extended:** Space Station Alpha's first resident crew will get to stay in space a couple of weeks longer than planned because of a tight shuttle launch schedule. Expedition 1 crew commander William "Shep" Shepherd, KD5GSL, says he's OK with the extension,

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however. The launch of the new ISS crew on shuttle Discovery has been pushed back from February 15 to March 1. That's because Discovery was delayed in returning from space in October and because NASA needs to replace 10 thrusters. Shepherd and Russian cosmonauts Yuri Gidzenko and Sergei Krikalev, U5MIR, arrived at the station November 2. Replacing them in space will be Russian cosmonaut Yuri Usachev and US astronauts James Voss and Susan Helms, KC7NHZ. Shepherd said he and his crew have more than enough food and water to make it through the additional two weeks. On its last mission in October, Discovery's landing was delayed two days because of bad weather and had to land at Edwards Air Force Base in California. Discovery didn't return to Kennedy Space Center until November 3, eating into the time it takes NASA to prepare the shuttle for another launch. During standard post-flight inspections, NASA workers found problems with some of Discovery's thrusters that require their replacement.

**\* More on postal rates for DXers:** The cost of an international Reply Coupon (IRC) will increase from \$1.05 to \$1.75 on January 7. A one-ounce letter sent via air mail to anywhere in the world (except Canada and Mexico) will cost 80 cents. A two-ounce air mail letter will cost anywhere from \$1.55 to \$1.70, depending on where it's going. The complete rate schedule is available on the USPS Web site, <http://www.usps.gov/news/2001rate.htm>.--Dennis Egan, NB1B, via Bernie McClenny, W3UR

**\* Trojan horse program link posted via Usenet groups:** Rick Ruhl, W4PC, reports that a "Trojan horse" program recently was posted as a "freeware ham program" on many Usenet groups, including rec.radio.amateur.dx. The program apparently is designed to grab passwords and possibly other confidential information from the computer of a person who downloads and runs the program. Those who checked it out report the program, once executed, will dial into the Internet and upload passwords and possibly other data from the user's computer. The individual posting the message, apparently from Sweden, identified himself as "Jonas." The questionable file was said to be on the "27 MHz WorldWide" home page (at <http://home.swipnet.se/27mhz/>) but the file was unavailable as of December 12.

**\* Updated Volunteer Examiner manual now available:** The revised edition of The ARRL Volunteer Examiner Manual now is available in PDF format from the ARRL Web site, <http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/veman2000finalpdf.pdf>. Hard copies of the manual, which was prepared by ARRL-VEC Manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ, and his staff, will be shipped soon to prospective Volunteer Examiners who requested the updated manual. An initial stock of manuals was expected at ARRL Headquarters by December 22.

**\* Bouvet (3Y) is on the air!** Astronaut Chuck Brady, N4BQW, is on the island of Bouvet (3Y) and on the air using the call sign 3Y0C. Bouvet is the 10<sup>th</sup> most-wanted entity on The ARRL DXCC List. Brady, a group of scientists from South America and a team leader from Norway will be there

for three months for scientific studies. This is not a DXpedition, but Brady expects to find some time to operate and has been on 20 meters SSB. QSL via WA4FFW. For more information, visit the Amateur Radio Infoline site, <http://www.qsl.net/zr1dq>.--Bernie McClenny, W3UR

**\* Petition seeks increased privileges for Novices and Techs with Morse credit:** The FCC has put on public notice a petition from Joseph Speroni, AH0A, that calls on the FCC to modify its rules to permit current Novice and Tech Plus or Technician with Morse credit licensees to operate CW in expanded subbands on 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters. Speroni proposes permitting Novices and Technicians with Element 1 credit to operate on CW on 3525-3750 kHz; 7025-7150 kHz, 21,025-21,200 kHz and 28,000-28,500 kHz, maintaining the current power limitation of 200 W PEP on those segments. The FCC has assigned his petition Rule Making number RM-10018.

**\* Vintage transmitters on the air for Straight Key Night:** The Maritime Radio Historical Society K6KPH will be on the air January 1 UTC for Straight Key Night from the historic KPH commercial station site. The station will transmit on 7050 kHz. Operation on 20 meters also is possible. K6KPH Chief Operator Dick Dillman, W6AWO, says the group will attempt to activate a 1950s-vintage RCA 303L on 14,028.6 kHz. Transmitters are located at the original RCA transmitting station at Bolinas, California. Operators will be at the RCA receiving station at Pt Reyes, keying the transmitters by a landline link.--Dick Dillman, W6AWO

**\* Kid's Day is January 6:** Kid's Day is intended to encourage young people--licensed or not--to enjoy Amateur Radio. As a "mentoring opportunity" for experienced amateurs, Kid's Day can give youngsters hands-on experience that might lead to an interest in Amateur Radio. The next Kid's Day is January 6, 2001, from 1800 to 2400 UTC. There's no limit on operating time. The suggested exchange is name, age, location and favorite color. Stations may work the same station again if an operator has changed. Call "CQ Kid's Day." Suggested frequencies are 28,350 to 28,400; 21,380 to 21,400; and 14,270 to 14,300 kHz plus 2-meter repeater frequencies (with permission from your area repeater sponsor). Observe third-party traffic restrictions when making DX QSOs. Logs and comments may be posted to [kids@contesting.com](mailto:kids@contesting.com) and reviewed at <http://www.contesting.com/kids/>. All participants are eligible to receive a colorful certificate. Send a 9x12 SASE to Boring Amateur Radio Club, PO Box 1357, Boring, OR 97009. For more information, visit the Kid's Day Web site, <http://www.jzap.com/k7rat/>.

**\* Germany drops code speed to 5 WPM:** Germany has approved a change in its Amateur Radio rules that lowers from 12 WPM to 5 WPM the Morse code text speed required for HF operation. The Second Order for the Change of Amateur Radio Regulations was issued December 13, 2000,

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by the Federal Minister for Economics and Technology.--IARU

**\* MARS celebrates 75 years of service:** What's believed to be the largest MARS net on record took place November 24 when 527 Military Affiliate Radio System members from 47 states, Puerto Rico and Guam checked into the MARS net to celebrate its 75th anniversary of service to the US Armed Forces. Five veterans of the original Army Amateur Radio System here on hand for the occasion, including Marvin Bernstein, W2PAT/AFA1DA--age 85 and first licensed in 1932. Founded in 1925 the AARS became the Military Amateur Radio System in 1948 and was later renamed the Military Affiliate Radio System. For more information, visit the Army MARS Web Site, <http://www.asc.army.mil/mars/>.

**\* Second and third ARISS contact schools named:** Schools in Virginia and New York will be the second and third schools to attempt Amateur Radio contacts with the Expedition 1 crew of Space Station Alpha, the International Space Station. Armstrong Fundamental Elementary School, Hampton, Virginia, and Jan Sheldon Elementary School, Varysburg, New York, hope to complete contacts in January as part of the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station--or ARISS--program. The QSO with Armstrong School is tentatively scheduled for January 4 or January 5. The Sheldon School QSO is tentatively scheduled for the January 15-19 time frame, but all school QSO schedules are subject to change. The first ARISS school contact between Expedition 1 Commander William "Shep" Shepherd, KD5GSL, and youngsters at Burbank Elementary School in Burbank, Illinois, was completed December 21.

**\* Snowbound ham uses 2-meter H-T to call for help:** Suffering recently from bronchitis and pneumonia, Jim Stewart, KK7VL, a homesteader in a secluded area near Bettas Pass, Washington, used his 2-meter hand-held to summon help. Stewart called his friend, Jim Flint, W7TXU, on the Kittitas County Repeater Association's repeater, advising him of his worsening condition and requesting assistance. Flint, a member of the Kittitas County Search and Rescue team, enlisted the help of Deputy Sheriff Robb Lipp. But, snowdrifts prevented them from reaching Stewart's home. A snowmobiler passing by took the rescuers to Stewart's house. Lipp then used his GPS and radio to guide a rescue helicopter to the scene, and Stewart was airlifted to a hospital in Yakima. "Many of our present rescue team members are already hams," said Flint, "and as a result of this rescue being reported on local radio, several people have called and asked to join our team, and to learn more about Amateur Radio."--The Daily Record (Ellensburg, Washington)

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