

Communicator

Volume 3 Issue 9

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Dear Members,

I am happy to report that we have licensed 16 people this August!!! Congratulations to all our new hams. One of our new hams has a callsign that differs from one of our current members, Lucresia Tucker, KD5PKF, got her callsign on Thursday evening. As you may notice it is the same, with one letter different from our Church Coordinator, Joe Watts, KC5PKF. Good luck on keeping those straight.

I'm sure that, by now, most of you have noticed a difference in the repeater. Well, that's because, there is. We have upgraded our repeater and now we are having awesome results. We have been testing it's capabilities since we

did the upgrade and I am happy to say that it is working even better than we had hoped. A lot of our dead spots around Johnson county are no longer there. Dave has even talked on it from Commerce and I35 in Dallas!! Tim, KD5LNN(I think), even talked on it with a HT, rubber duck, from inside his truck in Waxahachie!! I tell you, this has been an exciting last couple weeks!!

Curtis Mohr, KC5PWP
Newsletter Editor, TAEC

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Reminders

- I'm looking for articles that can be put into the newsletters. Please email any articles to me at kc5pwp@hyperusa.com , no later than the specified date below.
- The next club meeting is on August 19th
- The September *Communicator* Deadline is September 9th

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Secretary's Report

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Treasurer's Report

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ARRL Excerpts

New Amateur Satellite to Link Remote APRS Nodes



A prototype version of PCSat, on display at the US Naval Academy.

NEWINGTON, CT, August 7, 2001-- PCSat, a US Naval Academy Amateur Radio tracking and communications satellite, is scheduled to launch September 1 (0100 UTC) from Alaska. PCSat will augment the existing Amateur Radio Automatic Position Reporting System (APRS) by providing links to the 90 percent of Earth's surface not covered by the terrestrial network.

PCSat was designed and assembled by midshipmen at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, to gain practical hands-on experience in

support of their aerospace curriculum. The midshipmen worked under the guidance of Academy Senior Project Engineer Bob Bruninga, WB4APR--the recognized "father of APRS."



Bob Bruninga, WB4APR (center), looks on as ensigns Dan Boutros (left) and Brad Schwenzer (right) describe satellite's telemetry sub-module.

"We hope that PCsat will be a new direction for amateur satellites by serving the communications needs of travelers with only mobile and hand-held radios anywhere on Earth," Bruninga said. PCSat will be the first satellite to report its exact position directly to users via its onboard GPS. This means that whenever the bird's in view, users won't need tracking software to determine its position. Although the satellite is being developed as a proof of concept for the Naval Academy, it will be available to all radio amateurs. "The ability to participate in a satellite project from

design through to launch in one year is an extremely valuable lesson for future Naval officers who are so dependent on space in their careers," Bruninga said. Midshipmen involved in the project came from the classes of 1999 through 2001.

Bruninga said the satellite will demonstrate vehicle tracking and communication for GPS-equipped remote travelers--including Naval Academy vessels at sea, cross-country travelers, expeditions or anyone far from the existing [APRS terrestrial tracking infrastructure](#).

In addition to its APRS capabilities, the satellite will offer 1200 and 9600-baud packet operation on VHF and UHF. The VHF packet frequency is 145.825 MHz. The UHF packet frequency is 435.250 MHz. For APRS

digipeating, the satellite will use the recognized North American APRS frequency of 144.39 MHz, and, if necessary, this could be used to send an urgent message to anyone in the network. The satellite employs dual redundant systems.

Bruninga said that PCsat should make a great classroom tool, since its telemetry can be received by any hand-held packet radio for display to students on their PCs. "And with the Internet connectivity of ground stations worldwide, classes are not limited to observing passes only over their school, but anytime PCSat is in view of any other participating school."

PCSat was deemed spaceworthy last month. Bruninga leaves for Alaska and the launch preparations this week. PCSat will be one of four satellites in the Kodiak Star payload, and the only one with Amateur Radio capabilities. The others are Sapphire, a joint effort between the Naval Academy's Small Satellite Program, Stanford University and Washington University at St. Louis;

[Starshine III](#) for NASA; and PicoSat for the US Department of Defense Space Test Program.

An Athena I launch vehicle will carry the satellites into space from the Alaska Aerospace Development Corporation's Kodiak Launch Complex. This will mark the first attempt to put a satellite into Earth orbit from Kodiak Island.

The spacecraft will be launched into an 800-km circular orbit.

Construction of PCSat was made possible by a grant from The Boeing Company through the United States Naval Academy Foundation.

For more information, visit the [PCSat Web site](#).



Six USNA midshipmen who were part of the PCSat project pose with the prototype satellite: Laura Nolan is in front, standing next to the spacecraft. In back are (L-R) Dan Boutros, Brad Schwenzer, Dan Sullivan, Steve Lawrence and Alex Gutweiller.

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==>SUSAN HELMS, KC7NHZ, WEARING FIELD DAY PIN PROUDLY ABOARD ISS

International Space Station Expedition 2 crew member Susan Helms, KC7NHZ, is proudly wearing her ARRL Field Day 2001 pin in space. The pin was ferried up to the ISS on the recently completed shuttle Atlantis mission and presented to Helms by crew member Jim Reilly.

Helms not only has been an outstanding participant in the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station school contacts, she also took it upon herself to run the first Field Day operation from space.

"We were so impressed with Susan's abilities on the air that we wanted to give her a little recognition for her efforts," said ARISS International Board Chairman Frank Bauer, KA3HDO.

The pin came with a formal letter of presentation that cited Helms' "pioneering efforts as a Field Day contestant." Carolyn Conley, KD5JSO, of NASA reports Helms was "thrilled" to get the Field Day pin and glad to learn that her participation was appreciated.

Using the ISS US Amateur Radio call sign NA1SS, Helms joined in the annual ARRL Field Day from June 23-24, working several dozen stations. ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, has said that NA1SS contacts will count for Field Day credit, but they will not count for satellite bonus points.

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==>AMATEUR RADIO HELPS SAVE FOUR LIVES

Just four weeks after exercising their emergency communications skills during ARRL Field Day, members of the Northern Southeast Amateur Radio Emergency Services and Juneau Amateur Radio Club in Alaska put those skills to use to help to save a fellow ham operator and several companions.

On July 22, Mark Griffith, KL0MO, was rafting down the Herbert Glacier River with three friends when their raft was severely damaged. The group was stranded on a small island in the middle of the raging river, swollen by heavy rainfall.

Early that evening, Griffith used the KL7PF repeater phone patch to call 911, and search-and-rescue personnel were alerted. Meanwhile, Bob Dewey, WL7QC, overheard Griffith's transmission and set out for the trailhead to meet with the rescue personnel. He was able to contact Griffith on simplex, providing direct contact with rescue personnel.

Rain hindered the rescue, and the river now covered the trail. The Juneau

Mountain Rescue team had to cut its way through dense undergrowth to get to the stranded rafters. The weather prevented the use of a helicopter, and the river was too fast--and had too much debris--to use a rescue boat.

The four huddled for the night beneath the remains of their raft. Although Griffith's battery was depleted, it retained enough power to receive Dewey's communications.

A member of the SEADOGS search-and-rescue dog team located the rafters at around 1 AM, and they were airlifted off the island around 7 AM by the US Coast Guard. The four rafters suffered only mild hypothermia.

"Ham radio really saved their lives," said incident commander Bruce Bowler. "It was a great help in finding out exactly where they were and what condition they were in. We were able to get updates throughout the night on how they were doing."--Nick Meacher, N3WWE

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==>FCC SCRUTINIZING GEORGIA ARRL VEC EXAM SESSION

The FCC has announced the audit of a second ARRL VEC Amateur Radio examination session. The ARRL VEC alerted the FCC to discrepancies in the May 19, 2001, exam session in Statesboro, Georgia, and forwarded relevant documents, prompting the FCC audit. Last month the FCC also announced that it was auditing a May 10 ARRL VEC exam session in Trumbull, Connecticut.

ARRL VEC Manager Bart Jahnke, W9JJ, says the 11 volunteer examiners listed on the Test Session Report remain suspended pending the outcome of the FCC audit. Suspension is standard operating procedure in such situations, he explained.

In an letter to the VEs originally sent July 23 but revised August 3, FCC Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement Riley Hollingsworth said that based on the evidence he's seen, volunteer examiners at the May 19 Statesboro session used exam question sets and Morse text identical to those used at several recent exam sessions. Hollingsworth said that apparently contradicts the intent of Section 97.509(f) of the Amateur Service rules, which prohibits administration of a "compromised examination.

"Furthermore," Hollingsworth continued, "it appears that the test candidates had been shown, or had access to, the Morse code answer key for the examination administered."

There were 13 applicants at the May 19 session. Eleven of them qualified for a new license or upgrade. At the FCC's direction, all applications are being held by ARRL VEC, pending the outcome of the FCC audit.

The FCC's letter of inquiry went out to volunteer examiners Ellie Waters, W4CJB; Cheryl L. Waters, W4CLW; Joanne D. Sharpe, KF4WFN; John W. Sharpe, WA4BE; Joseph A. Horne, N4ZAJ; George B. Grant, KF4WPU; Robert T. Jernigan, W4RTJ; Kathy L. Lanier, KD4MVY; Marshall R. Thigpen Jr, W4IS; Lawrence A. Lewis, K4RRR; and Charles F. Roberts, AI4A.

Jahnke said that, while the names of Roberts and Lanier appeared as participating VEs, information provided to ARRL VEC after the session indicated that neither was at the May 19 session. For now, they remain suspended along with the others listed.

Among other things, Hollingsworth has asked the 11 VEs to explain their roles at the Statesboro session and to detail any relationship between the Morse and theory tests administered at recent examination sessions and the ones used on May 19. He also asked them to state the relationship between the theory tests used for class and/or practice sessions and the theory tests administered at recent examination sessions.

He also wants to know the dates and locations of all exam sessions they've participated in over the past two years.

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Mark your calendars for Swapfest/Events - 2000

Aug 19	August TAEC Meeting @ 7:00 PM
Sep 6	Testing Session @ Joshua SDA Church
Sep 9	TAEC <i>Communicator</i> Deadline
Sep 16	September TAEC Meeting @ 7:00 PM
Oct 4-7	Union Pathfinder Camporee @ Woowooka Woods, OK
Oct 6	Temple Ham Expo @ Bell county Expo Center in Belton, TX

<http://www.tarc.org>

Oct 20 Denton Hamfest. <http://dentonhamfest.org>
Nov 10 Tri-County Hamfest. <http://www.qsl.net/tcarc-ntx/>

Important Websites

TAEC Web site
<http://taec.cjb.net>

The KC5PWQ Web Site
<http://vip.hpnc.com/~geraldm/>

The KC5PWP Web Site
<http://kc5pwp2.cjb.net/>

Official Austin Ham Home on the web (ARO & AARC)
<http://www.repeater.org>

ARES information can be found at:
Main: <http://www.tcares.org>
Backup: <http://www.sss.org/~ares>

Newsline, PO Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066
The webpage address is:
<http://www.arnewsline.org>
The e-mail address is:
newsline@ix.netcom.com

The Texas VHF-FM Society
<http://www.txvhffm.org>

Take practice ham tests on the web. A few locations are:
<http://www.hamtest.com>

FCC's Universal License System
<http://www.fcc.gov/wtb/uls>

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