



The Monitor

Official Newsletter of the Brantford Amateur Radio Club

November/December 2002

Edited by Terri Ellison VA3TDE and Ken Dobson VA3 DDB

Presidents Message:



It seems like a couple of weeks ago I was boxing up the Christmas Decorations and hauling them down for storage. Now the stores are starting to sneak them back on the shelves again. What happened to Summer and Thanksgiving?

Speaking of Thanks and giving I would like to take this opportunity to give thanks to all the members for the training they are giving me as President. This is one position where you know that our club is not a one HAM Band. We have a great group of talented people from all walks of life with the one goal of having fun through RADIO.

Congratulations to Ebe, VE3 EBH for being our Ham of the Year for 2002. Ebe has put a lot of time and effort into many community events on behalf of our Club with his ability to lead the rest of us into his plans.

Our new IRLP node is up and running with teamwork and persistence from our Talented Techs. This looks like it could catch on and our UHF repeater will see more use. GREAT WORK Gang!

We have a lot of things to look forward to this year if we can get all that we have on the list in practice. Hopefully some courses for Basic and Advanced, project building, and in better weather we can try a Fox Hunt.

I hope all who have antennas to sting up are finished, colder weather is coming and so is the colder and stable radio condition. I have one up and one half up. My G5RV still rests on the roof top until I get it farther up the trees. Perhaps a few more bananas in my diet will help.

If there are any Hams reading this who have not been to the meetings for a while, come on out and say "Hi". We have a few new faces around the place and I am sure they could use your experiences well as the chance to meet you.

If you are not a Ham, come on out anyway, the bug may bite you.

I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Once again, thank you!

Bill Cunliffe VA3WRC



Philly Youngsters Meet Astronaut Peggy Whitson via Ham Radio:

from The ARRL Letter, Vol 21, No 43

US Astronaut Peggy Whitson, KC5ZTD, told students in Philadelphia that she thinks it's possible there's life on other planets somewhere in the universe. Using NA1SS aboard the International Space Station October 22, Whitson answered several questions from youngsters attending Spruce Hill Christian School. The contact was arranged via the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) project.

"Actually, I think with the thousands and thousands of universes that we can see," Whitson said, "and knowing that there are even thousands and thousand more that we can't, I think that on all those planets somewhere there probably is going to be life somewhere else--"

maybe not exactly like ours, but I imagine there's going to be some kind of life."



Whitson said one of the most "fun" things she does aboard the ISS is look out the window. "Seeing the earth from this vantage point of over 200 miles above the earth is really impressive. It's really a beautiful place that we live on, and I think we take it for granted sometimes, when we live there."

She said she also enjoys exercise--a necessity for long-term spaceflight. "We obviously aren't exposed to the effects of gravity, so we have to work very hard to maintain our physical fitness," she said.

Life in microgravity leads to demineralization of bones, Whitson explained. When the Expedition 5 crew returns to Earth next month, she said, it will take months before their bones return to normal. The crew likely will recover much more quickly from the other aftereffects of several months in space, she added, such as the dizziness or lightheadedness experienced by some returning astronauts.

The ARISS QSO got off to an uncertain start when Whitson and ground control operator Nancy Rocheleau, WH6PN, in Hawaii, apparently got on different frequencies. Initially, Rocheleau was able to copy NA1SS, but Whitson did not hear WH6PN. Once things got under way for real, the contact lasted a little more than seven minutes.

Remote audio between the school and the ISS via WH6PN in Hawaii was handled through a WorldCom teleconferencing circuit. Whitson, who is related to the wife of the school's principal, Seth Cohen, asked ARISS to arrange the Spruce Hill contact as a "crew pick." ARISS is an international project with US participation by NASA, ARRL and AMSAT.

Source:

The ARRL Letter Vol. 21, No. 43 November 1, 2002

Down For The Count?

[Dick Boley \(N3HKN\)](#) on November 7, 2002

Amateur Radio seems to be swinging its focus more and more to various competitions. A wide variety of contests, collecting various geographic QSOs, and collecting a variety of artificial political elements seems to be a significant trend. You can compete in world-wide contests which are well attended by the what are called big-guns. These appear to be focused on expenditures for rigs and antennas and a large team of dedicated operators. More localized sprints and parties offer a more gentle form of counting your points at a lower cost. Counting how many numbers you can collect on 10 meters has some form of attraction for some. Contacting as many lighthouses or islands offers a nautical flavor to allow you to count contacts. Of course, we cannot forget counting the number of counties as a mobile station straddles a county line in the middle of a desert.

While counting a variety of artificial elements seems to have very wide appeal the art of radio seems to be fading. Sounds like the old appliance operator speech. Well, that is a small part of it. I am sure that there are many very skilled individuals collecting and counting so that moniker does not universally apply. Perhaps I long for the Ham Radio that attracted me to the hobby in the first place. One where I was enthralled listening to Hams discuss technical issues, operating practices, and the thrill of contacting someone in a far away land. Now the discussions seem to focus more on how many rather than how. Counting is fast becoming the mainstay of the hobby. How many left-handed operators did you contact during a sandstorm in the Sonora desert now seems more important than the functional elements of the hobby.

So, where might that leave us? Can the hobby survive as more and more artificial creations spring up for us to contact and count. Have you contacted all counties in the USA and all districts in some countries. Have you made a thousand or more contacts at extraordinary 599 signal levels in a major contest? And so on.... While these efforts offer some measure of accomplishment, persistence, or expenditure of funds, do they materially contribute to the hobby? Is it possible to retain our extremely valuable frequency allotments if we are simply counting contacts with artificial boundaries? A good question. A question to ponder.

Dick N3HKN

Parent Bails Out Last Expedition 5 ARISS School Contact:

from The ARRL Letter, Vol 21, No 44

Despite some last-minute anxiety due to equipment failure, an October 28 Amateur Radio contact between Colorado youngsters and the International Space Station was successful. The contact between ISS astronaut Peggy Whitson, KC5ZTD, and middle school students at Silverheels Middle School in Fairplay was arranged as part of the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program.

"It's an experience we'll never forget, and we appreciate all the volunteers who made this possible," coordinating teacher Marcy Wilkins said. "I've been looking forward to this and so have the kids. They have been so excited about this since school started." The ARISS school contact was the last scheduled with a member of the ISS Expedition 5 crew.

Because the QSO was handled via a WorldCom teleconferencing link between the school and Earth station op Nancy Rocheleau, WH6PN, in Hawaii, all the school needed on its end was a working speakerphone. But, with all else ready, the school's speakerphone failed at the appointed hour. A parent rushed home and returned with a substitute unit, and the conversation went ahead as scheduled.

Student Jacob Reese wanted to know how long it takes Whitson to swim across the entire space station. Whitson said "swimming" in zero gravity is one of her favorite pastimes. "I actually can get across the station in probably less than a minute if I'm in a hurry," Whitson, said. "But sometimes high speed can get you in trouble, especially if someone happens to be in your way."

Replying to another question, Whitson took another mild swipe at the repetitious menu crewmembers consume while on ISS duty. "Every eight days we start over with the same foods we had the previous eight days," Whitson said. "So I think I'm looking forward to anything that's not on those eight days."

Whitson said it was an "amazing feeling" to lift off in the space shuttle. "It was a pretty exciting moment for me," she said. The first few days in space were another matter altogether. "You tend to feel like you have a head cold because the fluid has shifted toward your head, and a backache from having the fluid redistribute in your spine," Whitson explained. But, she said, those effects disappear quickly.

Toward the end of the contact, Whitson again reflected on the enjoyment she derives from living and working in

zero gravity. "Living up here on space station gives me an opportunity to enjoy the feeling of floating," she said. "It's an amazing feeling." Working outside the space station, she added, made her feel like "a very very fast bird." As she's told other students, Whitson said she hopes to one day return to space after her current ISS tour ends later this month.

Whitson and her Expedition 5 crewmates, Valery Korzun, RK3FZ, and Sergei Treschev, RK3FU, have been in space since June 5. The Expedition 6 crew of Kenneth Bowersox, KD5JBP, Nikolai Budarin, RV3FB, and Donald Petit, KD5MDT, will launch aboard the shuttle Endeavour November 11. Bowersox will serve as the crew commander, Petit will be the NASA ISS science officer, and Budarin will serve as a flight engineer. The Expedition 6 crew will be the third all-ham crew to serve aboard the ISS.

ARISS is an international project with US participation by NASA, ARRL and AMSAT.

Source:

The ARRL Letter Vol. 21, No. 44 November 8, 2002



QRZ.com ...

Worldradio is pleased to announce the appointment of Nancy Kott, WZ8C, of the FISTS CW Club as the new Editor of Worldradio Magazine. Nancy replaces Rick McCusker, WF6O, who left the magazine on 13 November for a career in Law Enforcement with the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department. Readers will recognize Nancy as a long-time columnist writing the "Positively CW" column for Worldradio. She also is the Editor of the FISTS magazine "Keynote."

This December issue of QST will feature an article on our **Education and Technology program in the schools**. I hope that each of you have a chance to read it and see the future of amateur radio.

This program actually got off the ground late last year and has grown to 26 schools in 2002. We have fourteen more in the queue for next year. When I proposed this project to the board of directors, I said that it should be funded by donations, not dues. I am gratified at the results to date. The amateur community has sent a loud and strong message that this is something that they want to support. You have shown us by your actions

and for that I, and the entire ARRL organization want to thank you for that support.

When I read my advanced copy of QST, I did not know that we were going to do a feature, so it was a surprise and actually the best Christmas present one could get.

Thanks to all of you for making it happen.

73 and all the best for the holidays.

Jim Haynie, W5JBP
President, ARRL



On November 10th the **outbreak of tornados** that swept through the southeast was a big eye opener for a lot of people. Most of all it showed the importance of Ham radio in a disaster situation. I would like to take just a moment to

praise the hard work of the Net control ops as well as Ed Pitchford KD4AY "President of Birmingham Amateur Radio Club" and Steven Moss KB4FKN which worked at the NWS for hours on end. But most of all Thank you to all the spotters that risked there lives to warn others of upcoming terror. I was one of the spotters the stayed with the Tuscaloosa tornado and worked it all the way to Bessemer. I had some one at a stop light this morning roll down there window after seeing my SKYWARN decal on the truck telling me thank you for all you did Sunday night. So now I am just extending that thanks to my fellow Hams and friends.

Jay Zilinskas 73s KG4TUC



Stupid Amateur Tricks 101 ...

Transistors do get hot.
Transistors are sometimes supposed to get hot.
Transistors with heat sinks get hot.

While troubleshooting an amplifier, I suspected the heat sink may be shorting the case. After removing the heat sink I switched on the amplifier (briefly I said). I smelled something hot. Aha! I could smell a hot circuit board. As I got closer to the source, I felt pain in my nose.

I wore the Motorola symbol on the end of my nose for a few days. But I was right. The heatsink was shorting the

transistor.

Several Elmers, who noticed that famous sign, pointed out this short could probably be found without switching on the power!



Lesson learned: Solder drips.
How learned: First time installing an HF rig in the car. I was soldering to the dashboard (they were made of metal in those days) for the multivibrator power supply (am I OLD???). I just kept feeding more (acid-core) solder into the joint where the copper braid joined the inside of the steel dash and it flowed and flowed and flowed. About two ounces of molten solder finally overcame a little lip and poured neatly onto my face. That was the only time in my life that my wife was thankful that I had a beard. Did you know that beard hairs can melt together and form a giant mess? I did get burned, but it would have been a LOT worse without the beard.

I'm not really sure how to indicate this lesson. For many years, I worked a traffic net on 80 meter CW. When the gang would meet at a hamfest, we'd chat about the differences between the morning net, the afternoon net, the evening net, the slow speed net, etc. There was a net referred to as the "alarm clock net", and I assumed it was early in the morning. I stayed home from work one day to do some stuff on the house and learned differently. At 10:00am, I heard our alarm clock go off. I went into the house to see why. My wife said she always set it for 10:00 am, and that's when she called her elderly mom to see if she needed anything! I was in the habit of leaving the rigs on, since the old tube rigs drifted. To ensure that they would not accidentally transmit, I switched them from CW to SSB - forgetting about that new-fangled "VOX" stuff. My wife's sewing room and my hamshack were the same room. And she placed that wind-up alarm clock on my ham desk - about six inches from the microphone. Had been going on for six months - and that's how that CW net became known as the "alarm clock net". I never told the guys whose alarm clock it was.



Coming Events

Annual Christmas Dinner

Tuesday December 17th, 2003 at 6:30pm

Knights of Columbus
12 Catherine Ave., Brantford

Cost: \$14.50

Members and non members are invited to attend.

Please contact Mr. Paul J Tourangeau VE3IUA for additional information and to make your reservation.

Home Tel: 753-1034
Work Tel: 753-1679
Email: ptouran@bfree.on.ca

*Please bring a small gift for exchange.

ESSENTIAL CLUB INFORMATION

President: Bill Cunliffe, VA3WRC
Vice-President: Bob Moore, VE3AVU
Secretary: Ken Dobson, VA3DDB
Treasurer: Paul Tourangeau, VE3IUA

MEETINGS: Every Tuesday at 7:30 PM.
Business meeting, second Tuesday of the month

LOCATION: Canadian Red Cross Society, 25
William St. 1st Floor, Brantford.

MAILING: Brantford Amateur Radio Club, P.O.
Box 25036, Brantford, ON, N3T 6K5

REPEATERS: VE3TCR 147.150 MHz+600
KHz & 443.025+5 MHz

INTERNET WEB SITE:
www.bfree.on.ca/comdir/alh/bramaradio/ve3ba.htm

e-mail: ve3ba@bfree.on.ca

