

telstar



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF STARS (SOUTH TOWNS AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY)

ISSUE 291 MARCH 2006

SuitSat-1 Flawed but Successful

On February 3, a very unusual amateur radio satellite called SuitSat-1 was hand-launched by Cosmonaut Valery Tokarev from the International Space Station (ISS). SuitSat-1 is a surplus Russian Orlan spacesuit which has been modified to function as a transmit-only satellite using the call sign RS0RS on 145.990 MHz.

Astronaut Bill McArthur KC5ACR took live pictures of the launch for NASA-TV. The sight of the spacesuit slowly drifting away from the ISS looked like a scene from a science fiction movie where the astronaut's tether broke, and he helplessly floated off into outer space.

Hams and school children around the world were eagerly waiting to hear the eight-minute cycle of a voice greeting in several languages followed by telemetry and a SSTV image. It was anticipated that the signal would be able to be heard with a VHF transceiver or scanner plus a simple antenna.

Unfortunately, during the first orbit, reports began coming into www.suitsat.org that most hams could not hear anything from the satellite. Then two hams in Japan reported hearing a very weak signal. By the time that the satellite had completed its second orbit, NASA was reporting that the satellite appeared to be non-functional and

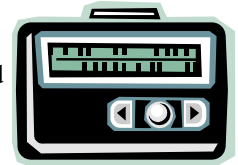
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ARRL Division Director to Speak in April

ARRL Atlantic Division Director Bill Edgar N3LLR will be the special guest speaker at STARS meeting on April 6. We will be inviting hams throughout WNY to hear from the person who represents ARRL members from this area in all important ARRL Board decisions

March Meeting

This month's club meeting will begin at 7 PM on Thursday, March 2 at the Hamburg Youth Center (Prospect Ave. at Hawkins Ave.). All interested in amateur radio are invited; neither club membership nor an amateur radio license is required.



If you have any radios or other equipment that you would like to swap, bring them with you to the meeting and we will have a little swapfest and ragchew after the meeting.



Above: Orlan spacesuit with SuitSat equipment modification including controller and antenna mounted on helmet and launching handle at waist.

STARS & ARRL Memberships

Membership in STARS is open to anyone with an interest in amateur radio. A license is not required. Membership applications may be obtained by sending a SASE to Judy Levan N2TEZ, 120 University Blvd., Depew, NY 14043, from the newsletter editor or from board members.

Annual Dues are payable on January 1 and are \$21 for a single membership, \$27 for family memberships and \$8 for a student membership (through grade 12). The dues are pro-rated on a monthly basis for new members plus there is an initiation fee of \$5 when first applying to the club. For example, a new member joining in July would pay \$10.50 (6 months X \$1.75 per month) plus the \$5 initiation fee for a total of \$15.50.

Applications should be returned to Judy N2TEZ along with the appropriate dues. The applications will be reviewed and voted on by the Board of Directors at the business meeting. The applications are then voted on by the general membership at the next regular club meeting.

Members who are joining ARRL for the first time or who are renewing their membership should send their ARRL membership forms to Jack Cullum, Jr. KB2ESM, 6871 Webster Rd., Orchard Park, NY 14127 along with a check made out to STARS. No extra cost to you and STARS benefits!



Club Net

STARS club nets are open to all to exchange information on local amateur radio activities.

STARS WB2EZU Memorial HF net meets at 10 AM local time on Saturdays on 3.925 MHz +/- QRM. Bob Lehning WA2YSJ is usually the net controller.

From The President

This year is just flying bye; it is March all ready. Wow, seems like it was just the holidays a few weeks back.

Found an interesting item on the internet about using this pretty cool, web site that lets you create your own USPS 39 cent postage stamps called PhotoStamps®. The cost is based on volume but for about 80 cents per 39 cent stamp or about \$17.00 for a sheet of 20 you can create your own stamp to go with your QSL card. Obviously not for every day mail but might improve your return rate for QSL cards. For more information, go to: www.stamps.com.



Above: Use your personal photos to create PhotoStamps®.

We will keep it short and sweet this month. Remember also to be prepared for bad weather and ice storms this time of year. Keep your batteries charged and radios ready, spring is just around the corner. Practice emergency preparedness by getting on the air for these events and staying active.

List of ARRL operating events this month

4-5 ARRL International DX Contest = phone
12 North American RTTY Sprint
25-26 CQ WW WPX SSB Contest

Hamfests

Greater Buffalo Hamfest
Lancaster Amateur Radio Club
<http://gbhamfest.hamgate.net>

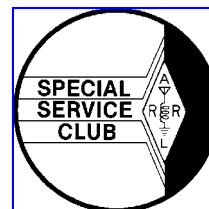
TechFest
Butler County ARA
<http://www.qsl.net/w3udx>

73's,

Bob (KA2WYE) Koster

Special Service Club

Thanks go to Vice President and Secretary Keith Patterson KC2DGC for completing all of the paperwork necessary for STARS to renew our ARRL Special Service Club designation for the next two years!



The Greater Buffalo "Winter" Hamfest

WNY's Largest Indoor Hamfest - Jam Packed

Sunday March 5th 2006

Prizes *Drawings *Commercial Vendors
*Ham Gear *Electronics *Computers *Fun
All You Can Eat.Pancake Breakfast

**Sellers: Reserve Your Tables "On Line"
http://gbhamfest.hamgate.net/gbwhf_table_info.htm
or call: 716- 825-7097 (Chuck)
or Email: kc2blh@aol.com

Hamfest Web Site:
<http://gbhamfest.hamgate.net>

Main Transit Fireman' Grounds
6777 Main St. Williamsville, NY
1/16th mile west from Transit Rd (RT 78)

Admission is \$6.00. Doors open 7:30 AM to general
public. Vendors admitted at 6 AM to set up.

Sponsored by:
Lancaster Amateur Radio Club, Inc.

Revision to New Technician Class Question Pool

The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators (NCVEC) had previously released a new question pool dated January 23, 2006 for Technician class (Element 2) examinations given on or after July 1, 2006.

Based upon comments submitted to them and further review, the NCVEC has made various revisions to the question pool and has re-released a new question pool dated February 6, 2006 for Technician class (Examinations 2) examinations given on or after July 1, 2006. The previous version dated January 23, 2006 should be discarded.

The new question pool now has 393 questions.

The February 6, 2006 version of the question pool can be downloaded in various formats at:

<http://www.ncvec.org/page.php?id=333>



New York Guard Amateur Radio Training

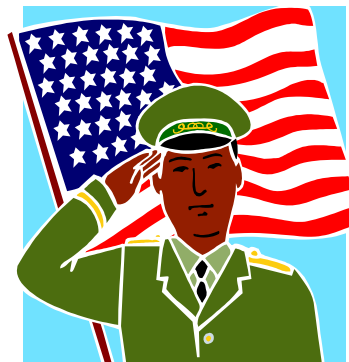
In an article in the February issue of the Telstar, we outlined how a group of New York Guard soldiers who train in Buffalo were studying to obtain their Technician class amateur radio licenses. Denis Uminski N2HP who is a Major in the New York Guard had covered many subjects during their training weekend in January.

On February 11, the soldiers participated in a guided self-study session at the Connecticut Street Armory in Buffalo. After spending the day studying the Technician class question pool, they took their Technician class exams at a VE exam session which was given by members of the STARS, LARC and ARATS VE teams.

The good news is that eight out of nine of the soldiers passed their exams and qualified for their new Technician class licenses. The remaining soldier came close to passing even though he didn't have the training in January and wasn't planning on taking the test when he arrived on February 11.

Thanks to the VEs who administered the exams including Bill Klepser WB2AIV, Bob Habermehl W2KKZ, John Maxwell W2JM, John Crawford Sr. KB2VWC, Judy Levan N2TEZ, Ed Patton N2ING and Terry Rockhold K2OO. Also, thanks to Jim Livingston N2SKT and Peter Orendorf AB2KG who volunteered to serve as VEs.

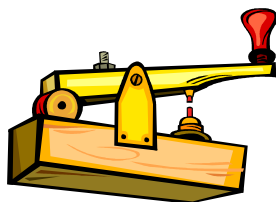
73, Terry K2OO



FCC Noncommittal on "Morse Code" Proceeding Action

Just when the FCC will act on the "Morse code" proceeding, WT Docket 05-235, remains hazy. The Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Order (NPRM&O) last July proposing to eliminate the Element 1 (5 WPM) Morse code requirement for all license classes. The Amateur Radio community has filed more than 3800 comments on the proceeding, and additional comments continue to show up, even though the formal comment deadline was last October 31 (with reply comments by November 14). The next--and most-anticipated--step for the Commission is to formally adopt any revisions to its rules and conclude the proceeding with a Report and Order (R&O) that spells out the changes and specifies their effective date.

"There really is no news," an FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau staffer told ARRL this week on background. "We certainly hope to release WT Docket 05-235 sometime this year, but we're not making any predictions at this time. We certainly are not saving up any big announcements for Dayton Hamvention."



Beyond eliminating the Morse requirement, the FCC declined proposing any other suggested changes to the Amateur Service.

The proceeding began with 18 petitions for rule making--many just calling for the elimination of the Morse requirement but some asking for more far-reaching changes in the Amateur Service rules. The various petitions attracted a total of some 6200 comments. The FCC subsequently consolidated the petitions--including one from the ARRL asking the FCC to establish a new entry-level license class and to retain the Morse requirement only for Amateur Extra class applicants--into a single proceeding designated WT 05-235.

The FCC has not proposed extending HF privileges to current Technician licensees who have not passed a Morse code examination. In its NPRM&O the FCC suggested that in a no-Morse-requirement regime, "codeless Techs" could gain HF access by taking the Element 3 General class written examination.

Any FCC decision to eliminate the 5 WPM Morse code requirement for HF access would have *no* impact on either the current HF CW-only subbands or on the CW privileges of Amateur Radio licensees.

(Continued on page 5)

SuitSat-1 Flawed but Successful

(Continued from page 1)

NASA suspected that the batteries had frozen.

Then things looked up as more and more hams with strong satellite tracking beams reported hearing snatches of voice messages and data although everyone said that the signal was far weaker than expected. The satellite appeared to be alive, but not functioning properly. Some hams have calculated that the signals may have only been 1 to 10 mW ERIP versus the expected 500 mW.

AMSAT asked hams around the world with strong satellite tracking beams to keep listening for the satellite and to make recordings of what they hear. Reports flowed into the website at: www.suitsat.org. Audio files of SuitSat-1 transmissions heard around the world along with other status reports can be found at www.aj3u.com/blog/.

On February 18, several hams who had been most successful in tracking SuitSat-1 reported that they were no longer hearing any signal and that they thought that the battery had dropped in voltage to a point where the satellite was no longer transmitting.

While the signal strength of SuitSat-1 was disappointing, the overall project is viewed by most as a success. It created tremendous publicity for amateur radio and the space program. The www.suitsat.org website generated millions of hits during its operation. School children and many others around the world followed the progress of the satellite. The project proved that a small satellite could be quickly and inexpensively built and safely launched from the ISS. There are other surplus space suits already on the ISS, and the project will hopefully be repeated.

73, Terry K200

STARS Board of Directors

President	Bob Koster	KA2WYE
Vice President	Keith Patterson	KC2DGC
Treasurer	John Cullum, Jr.	KB2ESM
Finc. Secretary	Judy Levan	N2TEZ
Secretary	Keith Patterson	KC2DGC
Director	John Crawford, Sr.	KB2VWC
Director	George Ebert	N2NOB

AMATEUR RADIO EXAMINATIONS

STARS will be holding test sessions on 3/11/06, 5/13/06 and 7/8/06 at Grace Lutheran Church (McKinley Pkwy. and Newton Road) in Hamburg. All candidates should report to the church by 9 AM. Walk-ins are allowed, but pre-registering will reduce time at exams. For information or to pre-register for STARS tests, contact Terry Rockhold K2OO at 656-0865.

Lancaster ARC will be holding test sessions on the third Wednesday of each month at the Lancaster ARC Club House, 525 Pavement Road, Lancaster. For information on or to pre-register for Lancaster exams, call Hal Cameron NH7R at 832-0031. Pre-registration is required.

ARATS will be holding test sessions on the first Saturday in the month (except when falling on a holiday weekend, when they will be on the second Saturday) starting promptly at 10 AM at the North Tonawanda Fire Headquarters at 495 Zimmerman St. Walk-ins accepted, pre-registration is highly recommended. For information on or to pre-register for ARATS exams, call Vic Gadzik K2YW at 694-9738 or e-mail k2yw@hotmail.com.

PROS holds test sessions as needed at 585 North Star Road, East Aurora. For information, contact Pat Murray NW2I at 652-8178.

Some exams do not allow walk-ins, so call ahead and make a reservation.

FCC Noncommittal

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Before it releases an R&O on the Morse code proceeding, however, the WTB wants to wrap up action in another Amateur Radio-related docket--the "Phone Band Expansion" (or "Omnibus") NPRM in WT Docket 04-140, released April 15, 2004. A dozen petitions for rulemaking, some dating back to 2001, were consolidated in the Omnibus proceeding. In that NPRM, the Commission proposed to go along with the ARRL's Novice refarming plan aimed at reallocating the current Novice/Tech Plus subbands and expanding portions of the 80, 40 and 15 meter phone bands. The FCC also agreed with an ARRL proposal to extend privileges in the current General CW-only HF subbands to present Novice and Tech Plus licensees (or Technicians with Element 1 credit).

The ARRL Letter 2/17/06

Local Area Ham Featured on Commercial Radio Station

Gary Tillinghast KB2YAA of Springville, NY was interviewed on a radio program called 9 AM Open Mike, hosted by Fred Haier on WSPQ 1330 AM on Wednesday, February 22.

Gary is the President of the Pioneer Radio Operators Society (PROS) and told the listeners about the PROS hamfest that will be held on April 22 at the Sardinia Historical Building on Savage Road in Sardinia and about the fox hunt planned for 11 AM that day.

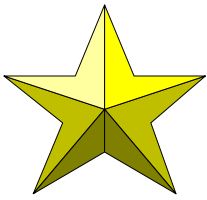


He also answered Fred's questions about amateur radio in general and was able to tell about the service aspect of amateur radio in regard to emergency communications in situations like Hurricane Katrina.

Gary is a blind ham, from a auto accident several years ago, and has been a amateur radio operator since 1996. He is also the President of the Cattaraugus County ARES/RACES group.



Above: SuitSat-1 drifts away from the ISS with the Earth's horizon in the background.



STARS



CLUB REPEATERS

The club repeater (WB2ELW/R) is located near Colden, NY (147.09/.69 output/input, with a PL of 107.2 Hz). Use a PL of 141.3 Hz for the Nike Base remote receiver.

STARS honorary southern repeater (KE2VW/R) is in Arkwright, NY (146.67/.07 out/in, with a PL of 107.2 Hz).

The club UHF repeater is located near Colden, NY (442.325 MHz with a PL access of 107.2 Hz.)

CLUB WEB PAGES

The club has a home site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.wb2elw.com>.

CLUB MEETINGS

Club meetings are normally held on the first Thursday of the month at the Hamburg Youth Center (Prospect Ave. at Hawkins Ave.) at 7:00 PM. Everyone is welcome.

Board meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Nike Base Club Station at 7:30 PM and are open to all club members.

CLUB HF STATION

The club Nike Base HF Station (WB2ELW) is located on Lakeview Road 1.75 miles east of Route 20 next to the Hamburg Town Arena.

STARS

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