

SEITS

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December Meeting

The next meeting is Saturday, December 11, 1999, at Godfather's Pizza, 902 W. Kimberly Road in Davenport. Lunch is at noon with the business meeting to follow.



Hope to see many of you there!!

SEITS LINK BACK ON THE AIR

The SEITS Linked Repeater System (the Link) has returned to service thanks to Dave Metz, WA0AUQ, and Randy Nelson, WB0VHB. The output of the UHF hub repeater in Winfield was down significantly. What this meant was that although the hub was receiving just fine, the outlying repeaters cannot hear the hub.

Dave anticipated something like this could happen, and has built a spare for the repeater from a Mitrek radio. Dave said he prefers to use the Micor as it seems to have better heat sinking and heat handling capacity. Dave plans to get another Micor, and make the necessary modifications to it. At that time he plans to switch radios again, with the Mitrek ready to go as a spare if and/or when it is needed again.

Please, the next time you see or hear Dave, thank him for all the effort to keep our system on the air!!

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AMATEUR RESTRUCTURING DETAILS POSSIBLE BY YEARS END

Knowledgeable sources in Washington say the amateur license restructuring issue has moved to the front burner at the FCC, and a Report and Order could be released before the end of 1999.

The Amateur Radio community has been awaiting license restructuring—known officially as the 1998 Biennial Regulatory Review of Part 97 (WT Docket 98-143)—for nearly one year now. While no one has mentioned a hard-and-fast date to wrap up the long-awaited proceeding, reports from several sources suggest that the R&O draft is in its final stages and could be complete within a month or so.

Whatever its final form—and no one has hinted at that—license restructuring poses significant implications for Amateur Radio and its future direction and growth. On August 10, 1998, the FCC proposed to phase out the Novice and Technician Plus licenses, leaving just four amateur license classes in place—Technician, General, Advanced, and Extra. The Commission also asked the amateur community to express its opinions on Morse code requirements for licensing and testing, but offered no specific recommendations.

At its July 1998 meeting, the ARRL Board of Directors issued its own plan to restyle Amateur Radio. Among other details, the ARRL plan also calls for four license classes and for “refarming” Novice/Tech Plus subbands to provide additional spectrum for higher-class operators. Under the League plan, the Technician license remains unchanged, and the General becomes the entry-level ticket to HF operation. The ARRL proposed Morse code requirements of 5 WPM for General and 12 WPM for Advanced and Extra class.

The restructuring debate generated more than 2200 comments to the FCC, many of them from individual amateurs. Once the FCC approves the Report & Order, a Public Notice will be issued, and the actual R&O will be released probably within a few days.

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HAMS WILL GET TO HELP NASA WITH SPACE EXPERIMENT

If all goes well, Amateur Radio operators will get a chance to contribute to a NASA satellite project by recording the data.

The Plasma Experiment Satellite Test—or PEST—at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center will ride on the Joint Air Force-Weber State University Satellite, or JAWSAT, according to project scientist Nobie Stone. The launch is set for no earlier than December 2. The primary payload will be the US Air Force Academy's Falconsat. JAWSAT will serve as a bus for several deployable payloads and the attached PEST experiment.

The telemetry stream from JAWSAT—which includes data from PEST—will be transmitted on amateur frequencies. “Hams will be able to obtain data that characterizes certain aspects of the ionosphere above the D, E, and F layers where most of their signals are reflected,” said PEST Project Manager Fred Berry, WA4IWY. “We’re going to publish the data format in terms that everyone can understand.”

Data from PEST will be using either a G3RUH modem or a GMSK modem. Data rates should be as high as 38.4 kb/s. Data will be transmitted on 437.175 MHz or 2403.2 MHz. NASA will publish instructions for sending in data so the PEST team can use it.

“It’s an experiment,” Berry said. “We’re hoping that high school and college kids will get involved and learn something about the ionosphere and radio propagation.”

Deployable payloads aboard JAWSAT are the Orbiting Picosat Automatic Launcher—or OPAL—and ASUSAT provided by Arizona State University. ASUSAT itself will contain amateur packet hardware and a 2-meter/70-cm FM voice repeater. OPAL will release three tiny picosats—one of them, StenSat—will have a crossband repeater aboard that will operate much like the popular AO-27 satellite.

After JAWSAT reaches its desired polar orbit at 700 km (420 mi) altitude, it will be about two weeks before PEST is first powered on. PEST will acquire data for at least a two-month period. For more information, visit http://science.nasa.gov/newhome/headlines/ast04nov99_1.htm .

—courtesy NASA Space Science News

JOURNAL NOTES

Due to the long holiday week for Christmas and New Year's, the January 2000 meeting will be held one week later than normal. The meeting will be Sunday, January 16. The location is yet to be determined. The deadline for the issue is Monday, January 3. We will begin assembling and printing on Tuesday, January 4 with a target mailing date of Friday, January 7.

The January meeting will be devoted to clearing up loose ends, and planning the groups activities for the coming year. The cold weather makes it good time to work on those projects you've been neglecting, so bring them to a meeting a tell us about them.

I have several articles on the burner right now, but did not have any of them in shape for this copy of the Journal. However, I am running out of things to write about. So how about lending a hand. We welcome all types of articles, from build it yourself, to new ways to use your gear, to reviews of equipment or software. I am always looking for articles on things I'm interested in but know nothing about!! That way I can learn while passing on the info to the rest of the group.

I have been updating the web site also. The first one to be brought up to date is the Repeater Page and the pages associated with it. I have received all sorts of info on new sites and links and I have included them in the upgrade. Look for upgrades to more of our pages as the winter progresses.

As always, for the most up-to-date SEITS information, check into our website at www.seits.org. We are always adding new stuff, so if you haven't been there lately, you may be missing something!

Til next time. KEOBX