

Citing personal and professional reasons, Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) International Chairman Frank Bauer, KA3HDO, announced on March 24 that he will be step down from all his ARISS duties, effective immediately. Bauer serves as ARISS Program Leader, ARISS International Working Group Chair and as the Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation's (AMSAT) Vice President for Human Spaceflight Programs, a position he has held since 1991. He is also one of two ARISS USA delegates, serving with ARRL ARISS Program Manager Rosalie White, K1STO.

Bauer is currently the Chief Engineer for the Exploration Systems Mission Directorate at NASA. This directorate is developing the next generation human spaceflight vehicles that will take NASA to the International Space Station (ISS) and then to the Moon, Mars and beyond. He is also providing some backup support to the Space Operations Chief Engineer who supports the space shuttle and ISS programs. "Work responsibilities, which have increased substantially over the past couple of years, coupled with some recent health issues within my immediate family, led me to the conclusion that I could not continue to provide the leadership and passion that has been characteristic of my past support to these amateur radio endeavors," Bauer explained. "This was a very hard decision. I will certainly miss the phenomenal ARISS international team and our mission to inspire the next generation of space explorers using ham radio as our platform. But I thought it would be best to step down at this juncture. Over the past 12 years, we have developed, mentored and matured an outstanding volunteer team with a wide breadth and depth. I am fully confident that they will keep the ARISS program running smoothly without missing a beat."

AMSAT-NA President Barry Baines, WD4ASW, has tapped Will Marchant, KC6ROL, to become the next AMSAT Vice President for Human Spaceflight Programs and the AMSAT USA delegate of the ARISS International Working Group. "AMSAT is fortunate that we have a very capable leader in Will Marchant who is intimately familiar with ARISS, our extensive human spaceflight program, and is well respected internationally," Baines said. "Frank's leadership has left a significant mark on the overall ARISS program and the cooperative relationship between Amateur Radio, NASA and other governmental space agencies; however, Frank also ensured that his team evolved to the point where the work that he pioneered will be carried on by those that he mentored and encouraged to take on greater responsibility."

In his new role, Marchant will work with White and the other ARISS International Delegates and the ISS Space Agencies to coordinate the development and operations of the Amateur Radio systems onboard the ISS. White said that she looks forward to working with Marchant in his new role: "He has provided outstanding leadership and support to ARISS from its very beginning, most recently as an Operations Team Leader. He helped pioneer the school group mentor role as part of the Shuttle Amateur Radio Experiment (SAREX) program in the early 1990s. Frank will be missed tremendously. It is incredible how much volunteer time and effort he put into ARISS educational activities; it was easy to see it was his passion."

With Bauer stepping down from the ARISS International Chairman role, ARISS International Vice Chair Gaston Bertels, ON4WF, will become the ARISS International Chairman, effective immediately. Bertels has been a leader of ARISS from its inception and serves as the Chairman of the ARISS-Europe team. He has established a close relationship between ARISS and the European Space Agency (ESA). This resulted in the development and the installation of ARISS

L- and S-band antennas on the nadir of Columbus, the European Space Laboratory. Bertels also chairs IARU Region 1's Amateur Radio Space Exploration Working Group (ARSPEX). "We can understand the reasons of Frank Bauer's resignation," Bertels said, "but we also feel how difficult this decision has been. Frank has inspired a worldwide group of passionate radio amateurs, working together to a common goal. Now it is up to us to continue in the same direction and with the same spirit. That's the best farewell present we can offer Frank."

Bauer's departure represents the culmination of more than 25 years of leadership and support to Amateur Radio activities on human spaceflight vehicles, including NASA-sponsored ham radio activities on the shuttle, Space Station Mir and the ISS. Starting in 1983, he led the Goddard Amateur Radio Club team that provided around-the clock space shuttle retransmissions from the WA3NAN club station.

These retransmissions provided the international ham radio community up-to-the-minute information during the flight of Owen Garriott, W5LFL, on STS-9 and subsequent SAREX flights. In the days prior to the Internet, these real-time bulletins and frequent orbital element updates could only be obtained through Amateur Radio.

In 1996, when the International Space Station design development was well underway, NASA Headquarters Education Office Executive Pam Bacon (Mountjoy) requested that the Amateur Radio community form a single, international team to provide one voice for all ham radio development and operations on the ISS. The SAREX Working Group, led by Roy Neal, K6DUE, was tapped to turn this vision into reality. In November 1996, Neal and White, under the auspices of the ARRL, Bauer and NASA's Matt Bordelon, KC5BTL, organized a joint NASA-international Amateur Radio meeting at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. This led to the formulation of the ARISS International Working Group of delegates representing Canada, Europe, Japan, Russia and the US, leading up to the current day ARISS program.

Since the beginning, the ARISS team of volunteers has developed and deployed ham radio equipment that resides in three modules of the ISS -- the Service Module, the FGB and the Columbus Module, as well as having deployed a short duration satellite in a space suit called SuitSat-1/Radioskaf/AO-54. These systems enable the ARISS team to inspire more than 15,000 students each year, encouraging them to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics through Amateur Radio communications with the ISS on-orbit crew. It also introduces these students and millions from the worldwide general public to the fun, exciting, multi-faceted world of Amateur Radio.

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