

WHITE NOISE



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December 1998

SEASONS GREETING

by Doug Welcker (WB4KGY)

It's hard to believe that December is once again upon us and twelve months have past so quickly. Being a displaced northerner I can remember when we use to have four distinct seasons with each having it own unique status. You use to plan your activities around the seasons. When the snow and ice melted it was time to clean up the house and yard; when it got hot it was lawn mowing and vacation time with weekends spent at the cabin on the lake; when the days started to shorten it was back to school, rake the leaves; and before you knew it Thanksgiving and Christmas were upon you.

Down here in subtropical South Florida we have been reduced to three sets of seasons all depending on your prospective. First there is Tourist season and Non Tourist season. If I lived in a cave under a sand hill I would know about this from the frustration that I see in my wife's face and the raised tempo of her frustration getting back and forth to work. Bet she can't wait to retire so she can drive at forty-five on the "I" during rush hours. The second set of seasons is Air Conditioning and Non Air Conditioning season. This runs somewhat concurrent with the Tourist season depending on your comfort level and location. But the best season is the Hamfest season. This starts in September at Melbourne after a long dry spell for those of us addicted to picking through boxes of other peoples junk. Never understood why Hamfest season and Tourist season end at the same time. Do they take all that stuff back north with them?

So another year has passed and another year begins.

Seasons greeting from the
Officers and Directors
of the Palm Beach Packet Group.

End on an Era Approaches

by Doug Welcker (WB4KGY)

The following was gleaned from a message by Scott (WA6LIE). I found it so interesting I followed his instruction

that I tried it myself. By leaving my radio and TNC on for a few days I was able to see the time to expect a flyover. I connected on my second try after a W8 stationed signed, queried the mailbox and disconnected. After no one else was observed I connected again. With all this operation I had only one retry! When I disconnected a Colombian station established with the BBS. Read Scott's article and give it a try. Don't wait too long as the MIR Space Station is on it's last legs and soon to be abandoned.

HOW TO WORK R0MIR-1

by Scott Avery (WA6LIE}

The MIR Space Station is currently orbiting the earth about every 95 minutes while traveling at roughly 17,000 MPH. Due to the fact that MIR is a moving object, and radio frequencies being involved here, Doppler corrections may be needed. On the 2 meter band, the Doppler is a maximum of 3.5 khz on a pass directly overhead (90 degrees). On a pass say 10 degrees above the horizon, the Doppler is small about 1 khz. This can be a very important factor in working the packet Personal Bulletin Board. This is because packets may become distorted. Here are some items to look at in your station for successful attempts.

Note: Doppler on 2 meters is really not too valid unless there will be a pass in excess of 45 degrees or so above you horizon. Your mileage will vary.

1. LOCATION

If you are in a bad location where it might be difficult to get a signal out, you might be limited to the number of passes that you can work. You might want to look into a simple 1/4 wave 2 meter groundplane. This antenna has a good lobe looking up. (pre-amp suggested) Another common antenna is a Jpole, and is a good antenna for this. If you are in the clear to your horizons, you have it made. However, Doppler and antenna type will be your disadvantage. For the average HAM station running say a 50 watt radio, and a Jpole antenna has a great advantage on MIR passes that are up to about 20 degrees above the horizon! Doppler isn't a real

consideration and your antenna pattern is ideal for something up to 20 degrees above the horizon, or a bit more! Most radios will work, and no frequency corrections are needed. Doppler up on UHF is around 10 KHZ and Doppler compensation is needed!

2. TRACKING

You will need some satellite tracking software to know when and where MIR will be in your area. There is a lot of tracking software available on the Internet. I use STSPLUS, and have for over 12 years. (read Download STSPLUS in this issue of *White Noise* - ed) Keplerian information on MIR and other satellites is updated twice weekly, and can be found on your local BBS.

3. FREQUENCY

The frequency is 145.985 simplex world wide. (1200 baud packet and Voice)

4. PACKET WISE

If you are not familiar with packet connections or mailboxes, do some experimenting on the ground first before trying to operate MIR. The TNC on MIR is a Kantronics KPC-9612+ V 8.1 and is operating at 1200 baud ONLY. Here is the HELP that you would get on R0MIR-1 when using the Help (H) command.

```

B(ye)          PBBS WILL DISCONNECT
E(dit) n [BPTYNFH] [>tocall] [<fromcall]
[@BBS] "old" "new"
H(elp)         THIS LIST!
J(heard)       CALLSIGNS WITH DAYSTAMP
J S(hort)      HEARD CALLSIGNS ONLY
J L(ong)       CALLSIGNS WITH DAYSTAMP AND
VIAS
L [x [y]] [;] LIST MESSAGES x THRU y YOU
CAN READ
L <|> call    LIST MESSAGES FROM OR TO
CALL
LB             LIST BULLETINS
LC [cat]       LIST CATEGORIES
LL n           LIST LAST n MESSAGES
LM(ine)        LIST UNREAD MESSAGES
ADDRESSED TO YOU
LO [+|-]       LISTING ORDER
LT             LIST TRAFFIC
LTn            DISPLAY LOCATION TEXT n=1-4
K(ill) n       DELETE MESSAGE NUMBER n
KM(ine)        DELETE ALL READ MESSAGES
ADDRESSED TO YOU
R(ead) n       DISPLAY MESSAGE NUMBER n
RH n           DISPLAY MESSAGE n WITH
HEADERS
RM(ine)        READ ALL MESSAGES ADDRESSED
TO YOU
    
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S(end) call SEND MESSAGE TO callsign
 S[B|P|T] call SEND BULLETIN, PRIVATE, or
 TRAFFIC

Please don't use the Help command on MIR. This is STANDARD to MOST TNC's and doing so just limits the use of MIR by other stations.

There can only be ONE user connected to R0MIR-1 at a time.

5. BE PREPARED

If you wish to send a message to the crew, have a file of message READY to go! What I usually do is make a message

to R0MIR before I even send it. On my KPC-9612, I get in my mailbox, and SP R0MIR@MIR Then enter the subject and then the message. When MIR is in range, and the mailbox is not being used, I forward the message. My TNC talks to MIR's TNC and goes through the forwarding process. This is a lot quicker! I send 3.7K of info in one minute! This includes the connect to disconnect time. Consult your TNC users manual for forwarding mail to a station.

Note: As of 12 June 1998 there is a Russian crew ONLY! They do not speak English or any other language. All mail addressed to the crew should be in Russian! As of 24 June 1998, the mailbox has been opened up to third party traffic. See MIREX UPDATES for more information.

HINTS:

please wait for a <<D>> frame from R0MIR-1 to the currently connected station before you try a connection!

Most TNC's use the command MCOM ON to see ALL frame headers. Consult your TNC user manual for more information.

cmd: MCOM ON

eg. R0MIR-1>WA6LIE [06/21/98 01:00:24]: <<rr2>>: (This is what my tnc shows)

R0MIR-1>W6XXX [06/21/98 01:00:30]: <<DM>>: (This station is QRMing)

R0MIR-1>K6XXX [06/21/98 01:00:34]: <<DM>>: (This station is ALSO QRMing)

Why? R0MIR-1 hasn't yet finished with WA6LIE, thus still connected!

The <<D>> is a disconnect request from R0MIR-1 (To connected station ONLY) At this time, you might be able to connect to R0MIR-1 IF the connected station has already send his <<D>> request.

R0MIR-1>WA6LIE [06/21/98 01:00:45]: <<D>>: (Now R0MIR-1 is done with WA6LIE)

A <<DM>> commonly seen is a "Disconnect" sent to a station. We call this DM City! In other words, no person is doing anything except getting Disconnected! This is seen then stations are trying to connect to R0MIR-1 when there is already a user connected! This is the main contribution to qrm and failures of those that are connected, or trying to connect, or send/read mail!

EXAMPLE:

If I were on a high speed highway, and STOPPED in the middle of the road to see where I was at, I would become a traffic hazard. Others would honk their horns and give obscene gestures. Someone else will rear-end me, and cause a major accident and close down the road. IF I had been aware of where I was at, and where I was going, there would be no incident, and everything would flow normally!

Bottom line: look, think and listen first!

Don't try to send a message to your buddy down the street to MIR's personal mailbox. It will not allow 3rd party messages. If you try, you will get a response - MESSAGES MUST BE ADDRESSED TO THIS STATION. Please Don't connect to your buddies mailbox or home station Via the MIR digipeater! This is like you and your buddy going down the highway at the same speed chit-chatting - impeding traffic!

** IF you can run your radio squelch open (using CD software KPC only), you will increase your odds of decoding the signal. Consult your Kantronics manual for more information.

6. BE COURTEOUS

See #5 above, and apply here.

Again, please don't try connecting to R0MIR-1 when someone else is already connected! You will get a R0MIR-1 **BUSY. When you get this, don't keep trying while others are connected. This just messes up the other station, and it is interference and will just take that much longer for the user to finish before he/she disconnects. Would you like others interfering with your connects to MIR? Look for the <<D>> frame from R0MIR-1 to the connected station. Using MCOM ON will allow you to see all these packets. Here is what MY KPC-9612 would show:

R0MIR-1>WA6LIE/1 [05/13/98 22:18:04]: <<D>>:

After you see this, hopefully, the ground station has sent his/her disconnect to R0MIR-1, and it will be ready for the next connect.

R0MIR

This is the callsign of MIR. This port has no value to working MIR except credit towards a QSL card. There is nobody at the keyboard. You will get *** BUSY ***DISCONNECTED

QSL requests USA and WW except Europe:

Dave Larsen - N6CO
PO Box 1501

Pine Grove, California
95665
USA

Please include a SASE (Business Size Envelope) and one IRC for international. If you are sending an IRC, Please make sure it is dated 1998, as the post office won't accept IRC's dated over 1 year old. "Green Stamps" (USA only) are appreciated for covering additional costs.

European QSLs To:
Radio Club "F5KAM - QSL Manger de "R0MIR"
" Carrefour International de la Radio"
22, Rue BANSAC - 63000 - CLERMONT-FERRAND - FRANCE
with a self-addressed envelope, and two 1998 IRC coupons.

If you have any questions, drop me a note!
73, Scott
E-Mail: wa6lie@juno.com
Packet: wa6lie@wa6lie.#wcca.ca.usa.noam

DOWNLOAD STSPLUS

Bill Manley KB4XE

Dave Ransom has released STSPLUS version 9848 as of November 28, 1998. To download an upgrade or this newest version in entirety, and other goodies, visit his web site at

<http://tie.jpl.nasa.gov/dransom/stsplus.html>

STSPLUS is a mainstay satellite orbit prediction program which has been in circulation many years. Ransom offers it as shareware and requests a minimum of \$15.00 donation for licensing.

What's New In Packet?

Doug Welcker WB4KGY

How about a 1200/9600 dual band held transceiver that will plug directly into you laptop? Or maybe a YAM (for "yet another 9600 modem"), a product of Italy that operates at 1200 and 9600 and is available as a kit or assembled. YAM connects to the COM port of a PC and is software-drive using PC/FlexNet, JNOS (Windows 95 or DOS), TFPCX 2.71 (DOS) or a Linux driver. A French development, PIC-RCT is a 9600 packet modem that interface with any TNC. It is driven by an on-board PIC microcontroller and is NRZ/NRZI

switchable. PIC-RCT includes a high-speed data output header (a 2x10 pin HE10 connector), a bit-error-rate test (BERT) function, and automatic test function that checks the integrity of the PIC and an accurate AF tuning on both transmit and receive - available as a kit of assembled.

For more information see pg. 90 December *QST*.

Suppose Edgar Allan Poe Used a Computer --

Once upon a midnight dreary, fingers cramped and vision bleary,
System manuals piled high and wasted paper on the floor,
Longing for the warmth of bedsheets,
Still I sat there, doing spreadsheets...
Having reached the bottom line, I took a floppy from the drawer.
Typing with a steady hand, I then invoked the SAVE command
and waited for the disk to store,
Only this and nothing more.

Deep into the monitor peering, long I sat there wond'ring, fearing,
Doubting, while the disk kept churning, turning yet to churn some more.
"Save!" I said, "You cursed monster! Save my data from before!"
One thing did the phosphors answer, only this and nothing more,
Just, "Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

Was this some occult illusion? Some maniacal intrusion?
These were choices undesired, ones I'd never faced before.
Carefully, I weighed the choices as the disk made monstrous noises.
The cursor flashed, insistent, waiting, baiting me to type some more.

Clearly I must press a key, choosing one and nothing more,
From " Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

With my fingers pale and trembling, Slowly toward the keyboard bending,
Longing for a happy ending, hoping all would be restored,
Praying for some guarantee Timidly I pressed a key.
But on the screen there still persisted, words appearing as before.
Ghastly grim they blinked and taunted, as my patience wore,
Saying, "Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

I tried to catch the chips off-guard - I pressed again, but twice as hard.
I pleaded with the cursed machine: I begged and cried and then I swore.
Then I tried in desperation, sev'ral random combinations,
Still there came the incantation, just as senseless as before.
Cursor blinking, mocking, winking, flashing nonsense as before.
Reading, "Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

There I sat, distraught, exhausted; by my own machine accosted
Getting up I turned away and paced across the office floor.
And then I saw dreadful sight: a lightning bolt cut through the night.
A gasp of horror overtook me, shook me to my very core.
The lightning zapped my previous data, lost and gone forevermore.
Not even, "Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

To this day I do not know The place to which lost data goes.
What demonic nether world is wrought where data will be stored,
Beyond the reach of mortal souls, beyond the ether, in black holes?
But sure as there's C, Pascal, Lotus, Ashton-Tate and more,
You will one day be left to wander, lost on some Plutonian shore,
Pleading, "Abort, Retry, Ignore?"

(Our gratitude to some unknown WWW author with condolences to Mr. Poe - ed)

PALM BEACH PACKET GROUP MINUTES

NOVEMBER 12, 1998

MEETING TO ORDER

President DOUG (WB4KGY) brought the meeting to order @ 19:34 hrs, introductions were made.

Treasure's report was not available, due to Marvin (KD2CK) being out of town. Full report will appear in the *White Noise*.

Technical report was given by Doug (WB4KGY).

1. Lake Placid site has been upgraded from Rose System to FPAC on Wednesday November 5th.
2. WPB SWITCH has had no problems for the past month.
3. Problems in the SRQ Lan are resulting in equipment being merged into local radio club.

OLD BUSINESS

Seventeen donated computers, monitors, and printers have been tested and stored. Thanks to Marvin's sons Philip and Stuart who were here for a visit. Club will offer a computer to any amateur that has and interest the digital modes. Applicants we be screened for needs. The Secretary will write an article for the West Palm Beach Amateur Radio Club news letter announcing the availability of the aforementioned computers. *White Noise* was mailed on November 12th. Marvin's computer is back up and running thanks to his sons. Polo shirts were delivered to the distributor however when Marvin (KD2CK) went to pick them up they were not the style that was ordered and will have to be reordered. There are books on Packet operations available from KE4GUM. We may have found antenna site in Lake Harbor for the replace of the Bel Glade site. An APRS site in Clewiston may also be in the near future. Satellite Locator site up and running on Bills (N4XEO) BBS. New NODE & SWITCH LISTS were passed out.

NEW BUSINESS

It is time for nominations and election of new officers for the coming year 1999. NOMINATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

For President DOUG (WB4KGY) nominated by Bill (KE4GUM) second by Bob (WD9ATM).

Vice President Mike Michaels (K2GPI), nominated by Bill (KE4GUM) second by Bob (WD9ATM).

For Treasure Marvin (KD2CK) nominated by Bob (WD9ATM) second by Mike (K2GPI).

For Secretary, Burke Grosse (KC4UEC) nominated by Bill (KE4GUM) second by Bob (WD9ATM). Howie Silver (KB2BBG) nominated by John (WB4MOZ) second by Bill (KE4GUM). Andy Czermann (KF4ATC) nominated by Bill (KE4GUM) second by Bob (WD9ATM).

A motion was made by John (WB4MOZ) that nominations be closed, second by Bill (KE4GUM).

Voting will occur at the December meeting. Additional nomination can be made from the floor in December. These people will lead us into the "NEW CENTURY". We would like to have members step forward to help the club in it's activities.

BARDS meeting Nov. 21st.@ Motorola. HAMFEST ACTIVITIES: Tampa Nov. 21/22 Okeechobee Dec. 5th.

ADJOURN/BREAK/WORKSHOP

Doug (WB4KGY) made a fine presentation "End of an Era Approaches" New things to come. (see article on MIR in this issue) Meeting adjourned @ 20:37 hrs.

Next PBPG Meeting Info

Doug Welcker WB4KGY

Bob (WD9ATM), the man with the most inquisitive mind, will give an educational secession on how to use and navigate the INTERNET via packet radio. Larry (W4BKX), a young 84, has made available to the packet radio community an INTERNET/TCP-IP gateway to the world. Bob will cover everything you want to know about the how/when/why of Larry's operation and INTERNET gateway is general.

See you there.

Minutes of November BARDS meeting

November 24, 1998

Bob, N4CU

Most of the attendees assembled at Marions Bagel Host. We had a good time discussing old times operating RTTY and the changes in keyboarding when we switched to packet. We adjourned after breakfast and assembled in the Motorola lobby. The program was by Dave KB0NNZ. It was an interesting tour of the Motorola manufacturing facility. Dave described the latest manufacturing processes. We followed the tour up with a stop at the Motorola Amateur Radio Club shack and checked out the TenTec Omni IV.

The December 19 program will be by Carl, W9ZGU.