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**ARISS News Release No.23-58**

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**ARISS PR**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**40th Anniversary Celebration**

**of the Positive Impact of**

**Amateur Radio on Human Spaceflight**

October 24, 2023 — Astronaut Owen Garriott, amateur radio callsign W5LFL, pioneered amateur radio communication from space on his STS-9 Space Shuttle Columbia flight, conducted November 28 to December 8, 1983. In his free time, during the STS-9 mission, Garriott became the **first ever** person from space to communicate with amateur radio operators on the ground. He was also the first to be heard directly from space by the public using simple FM receivers and scanners.   
  
Dr. Garriott's mission, 40 years ago, transformed astronaut communications from space forever, allowing amateur radio operators (hams) and the public to communicate with people in space. Prior to this, only a few mission controllers and heads of state could talk to an astronaut in space. Garriott represents the first of many spacefarers who employed amateur radio on the Space Shuttle, Mir space station and the International Space Station for public engagement, family connections and educational outreach. To date, well **over a million** people on Earth have participated directly in these astronaut radio contact engagements. The educational youth contacts, coupled with pre-contact education initiatives, have inspired, engaged and educated youth around the world and encouraged them to study and pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

As the ARISS (Amateur Radio on the International Space Station) team approaches the threshold of the 40th anniversary of human spaceflight amateur radio, we would like to gather the volunteer teams, astronauts, space agency officials, educators, and space and amateur radio enthusiasts to the Kennedy Space Center in Florida to recognize and celebrate the past forty years of this inspiring, educational, and free service and to share the excitement of what’s to come.

The conference entitled “The Positive Impact of Amateur Radio on Human Spaceflight: 40th Anniversary Conference” will be held February 22-24, 2024, at the Center for Space Education: Astronauts Memorial Foundation, located adjacent to the NASA Kennedy Space Center Visitors Center.

Highlights of the 40th Anniversary Conference include tours of the NASA Kennedy Space Center Visitors Center, human spaceflight amateur radio exhibits, networking sessions in the exhibit area, STEM education demonstrations, and two conference days packed with astronaut panel sessions, presentations by youth alumni in STEM careers, and recollections by educators and volunteer team alumni who supported Shuttle, Mir and ISS hardware development, flight operations and youth STEM engagement.

We encourage your attendance at our special celebration this February! For information on registration and special event pricing at local hotels, visit our event website at [www.ariss.org](http://www.ariss.org) and choose the drop-down menu tab labeled “40th Anniversary.”

Special Request:

Countless students, worldwide, have participated in our SAREX (Shuttle/Space Amateur Radio Experiment), Mir and ARISS programs over the past 40 years. If you are one of those students or if you know of a student who participated in our program and is in a STEM career, we would be delighted to hear about this and feature them as part of our celebration either through in-person participation, a video submission, email, or letter. We would also appreciate getting educator testimonials on the impact of SAREX, Mir and/or ARISS in their schools. Please provide this information to: [astro-hams-40yrs@ariss-i.org](mailto:astro-hams-40yrs@ariss-i.org).

**About ARISS:**

Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) is a cooperative venture of international amateur radio societies and the space agencies that support the International Space Station (ISS). In the United States, sponsors are the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), Amateur Radio Digital Communications (ARDC), Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation (AMSAT), NASA’s Space Communications and Navigation program (SCaN) and the ISS National Lab—Space Station Explorers. The primary goal of ARISS is to promote exploration of science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics topics. ARISS does this by organizing scheduled contacts via amateur radio between crew members aboard the ISS and students. Before and during these radio contacts, students, educators, parents, and communities take part in hands-on learning activities tied to space, space technologies, and amateur radio. For more information, see <http://www.ariss.org>.

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