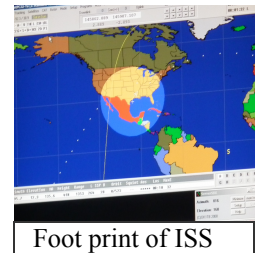


ISS Contact from Rock Bridge Elementary, Columbia Mo

by Bill McFarland, N0AXZ

As the sun rises over the eastern horizon on 5 March 2014, a dozen kids and a few amateur radio operators anxiously await the rising of the International Space Station over the southwest horizon. The radios are on, the steerable beams are lined up and programmed, the kids are lined up and programmed, and everything is ready. The computer software predicts Acquisition of Signal (AOS) for 7:59 AM. At 7:58:30, the first call is beamed up to space: "NA1SS, NA1SS, from KM0R.....NA1SS, NA1SS from KM0R...KM0R from

NA1SS, how copy"? A sigh of relief is heard and felt over the entire little Media Center at Rock Bridge Elementary School in Columbia MO: We are talking to the Space Station!



Foot print of ISS



First call

NA1SS from KM0R we have you at 5 by 3 right now, Over. KM0R from NA1SS I have you at 5 by 5, Over.

Well, let the questions begin!

For the next nine minutes 13 kids asked 2 questions each of Colonel Mike Hopkins, KF5LJG, on the ISS. The kids had generated the questions in advance and were ready to get them up to the astronaut in a timely manner. They understood that the ISS would be in range for less than 10 minutes. The Central Missouri Radio Association (CMRA) led in this project by Don Moore, KM0R, Myron Kern, W0ZH, and Justin Yesis, KL0VU, also understood the importance of these 10 minutes, having prepared for it over the last 6 months with radios, rotor controllers, beams, mounts, cables, computers and interactions with NASA.



First question, Riley, 2nd Grade

The project leader was Loretta Schouten, president of the PTA at Rock Bridge Elementary. She had the idea, presented the request to the CMRA, attended many of our club meetings, and coordinated everything from the school to NASA applications and documentation, local officials and the media. And she is now studying for her Tech license!.

After the ISS pass, the RB Elementary students found they had a



The TEAM

local astronaut in attendance and spent the next 35 minutes quizzing Dr. Linda Godwin, Professor of Physics at Missouri University and former NASA

astronaut, with four Shuttle missions and space walks. Audio was channeled into the school PA system so that the entire school listened in to the 55 minute program.



Loretta and astronaut Dr. Godwin

Related links:

Columbia Daily Tribune: http://www.columbiatribune.com/news/education/rock-bridge-students-talk-to-astronaut-on-international-space-station/article_0a7ae394-a48d-11e3-855e-10604b9f6eda.html

Columbia Public Schools : <http://cpstv.columbia.k12.mo.us/?p=485>

(all photos by N0AXZ)