

Orbit

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Editorial Office: 850 Sligo Ave.,
Silver Spring, MD 20910.
Telephone: 301 589-6062

Advertising Office: 221 Long Swamp
Road, Wolcott, CT 06716
Telephone: 203 879-1869

AMSAT: P.O. Box 27, Washington, DC
20044.
Telephone: 301 589-6062
Telex: 248-566

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Our Cover: The USSR pavilion at TELECOM-79, a large telecom-
munications exposition which preceded WARC-79 in Geneva in
September of that year, featured an Amateur Radio display which
included this blue-and-white package identified as an RS-Satellite
Transponder. Is it one of those now in orbit as RS-3 through RS-8?
(Photo by Dave Sumner, K1ZZ).

LET'S TALK

OSCAR

DATA IS DERIVED FROM OBSERVATIONS BY PROJECT OSCAR REPRODUCTION AUTHORITY. SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE. OSCAR P.O. BOX 1136, LOS ALTOS, CA 94024. OF THE LATEST AVAILABLE DATA.

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UTC 19 25 202 36 245 47 528 58 112 09 855 19 1038 30 1221 41 1404 52 1548 02 1731 13 1914 24 2057 35 2240 45	UTC 20 26 203 37 246 48 529 59 113 10 856 20 1039 31 1222 42 1405 53 1549 03 1732 14 1915 25 2058 36 2241 46	UTC 21 27 204 38 247 49 530 60 114 11 857 21 1040 32 1223 43 1406 54 1550 04 1733 15 1916 26 2059 37 2242 47	UTC 22 28 205 39 248 50 531 61 115 12 858 22 1041 33 1224 44 1407 55 1551 05 1734 16 1917 27 2060 38 2243 48	UTC 23 29 206 40 249 51 532 62 116 13 859 23 1042 34 1225 45 1408 56 1552 06 1735 17 1918 28 2061 39 2244 49	UTC 24 30 207 41 250 52 533 63 117 14 860 24 1043 35 1226 46 1409 57 1553 07 1736 18 1919 29 2062 40 2245 50

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Ellipsis...

AN EDITORIAL BY VERN RIPORELLA, WA2LQQ*

Symbols. Life abounds with them. Some say life is nought but symbolism. Even if that pronouncement is untrue, symbols do play an astoundingly complex role in everything we are and everything we do. Apparently symbols have always been important to human beings. Cave paintings from France, tool adornments from Peru and the great Pyramids of Egypt are easily viewed as symbols. The Pyramids were symbolic to the builders, and the owners (some of whom later became the occupants). Furthermore, the great philosophers and prophets of antiquity spoke in a language rich with symbols. Jesus, Mohammed, Moses, Buddha, Confucius and Zoraster spoke to their respective flocks in terms of symbols (parables). Indeed, the term "flock" is a symbol (metaphor) in itself. The question is, why use symbols at all? The prophets used symbols, no doubt, because in their wisdom they recognized explicitly the power of symbolism as effective communication tools; vehicles for conveying important yet abstract concepts such as ethics, metaphysics, etc.

"What," you may well be asking, "has all this got to do with amateur satellites?"

Consider OSCAR a symbol. You needn't select any OSCAR in particular; just OSCAR. Is it plausible that OSCAR obtains an enriched character, a dimensionality if you will, if viewed as a symbol?

At first blush it seems rather trivial to view OSCAR as a symbol. It is so widely recognized an image, however, that we might like to pursue the imagery beyond the superficial, trivial aspects.

Amateur Radio is a limited-edition ARRL publication sent largely to national policy makers and leaders in the Amateur Radio Community. Its cover design contains some interesting symbolism. (See below) The designer sees the amateur world in quarter spheres. The stylized United Nations symbol (Earth with olive branch) signifies international brotherhood; peace and understanding. The facial profile in conjunction with the HT denotes public service and emergency communications. The image of OSCAR 8 above the Earth symbolizes technical acumen; innovation. The ARRL logo in this context is seen as the unifying influence in binding the foregoing elements.

Why does OSCAR 8 appear as representing the technological arena? Is OSCAR 8 the most sophisticated Amateur Radio enterprise of all time? We suspect not. Its use as symbol, we find, is based on the



richness of the image it conveys and the simplicity of the image itself. In other words it is another example of conveying a very complex subject (advanced technology) with a recognizable, simple symbol. Thus, OSCAR 8 in the context cited above, is an *effective* symbol. What's more, we suspect that because it is an effective symbol, it assumes a general significance beyond that which it might inherently possess.

Now that we have broached the subject, let's see what lies deeper. Freudian's might suggest intriguing aspects of OSCAR symbolism resulting from its manner of "birth." After a harrowing journey from Earth this new entity, OSCAR, emerges from a sleek, cylindrical rocket to find life in the Sun.

Other symbolic images connected with OSCAR seem much closer and practical. For example, I've wondered for some time at our marked predilection for knowing the *precise* time of rise/set of OSCAR. Come now! Are our lives *really* going to be lessened if OSCAR appears ten seconds later than expected? Yet I find myself, stopwatch in hand, breathing a sigh of relief as 8J peeps across the horizon at me precisely on schedule. Why? Seen symbolically, this apparently innocuous neurosis expresses a human need for assurance "that all is well with the world." After all, if the "heavens" can't keep its affairs in order, what can be expected from we mortals? Sure enough, though, the sun rises and sets in well-

(Continued on page 13)