

Kiroli students place first-in-state call to ISS

BY MICHAEL DEVAULT
The Citizen

“NAISS, this is AE5B. It is time for our scheduled ARISS contact, over.”

Conner Wiedemeir repeated this mantra into the microphone on the Kiroli Elementary School stage eight times. The only other sound in an auditorium filled with Conner's 500 classmates was the static hiss of a HAM radio.

Following Conner's ninth call, there was a crackle. Then, a voice.

“AE5B, this is NA1-ISS. I read you loud and clear, over,” came the reply.

First contact made, Conner signaled “5 9” — readable signal and strong contact. Dr. Satoshi Furukawa had arrived.

Or at least his voice had.

Furukawa was greeted with the pin-drop silence and rapt attention of the entire Kiroli student body, faculty and more than 100 parents and community leaders, who gathered Thursday, Sept. 22, to witness a radio uplink with the International Space Station.

Eight buses overhead

At just under a million pounds, the International Space Station is the size of eight school buses and orbits more than 240 miles above the surface of the earth.

Look up at just the right moment in the day and you might catch a glimpse of her sailing



STUDENTS AT Kiroli Elementary School in West Monroe gathered last week to communicate via radio link with the International Space Station. The event was organized through the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station, or ARISS, program.

overhead. But look quick, because the International Space Station moves at a pretty nimble five miles per second.

These and any other of a dozen facts are common knowledge to any of the Kiroli Komets. They have been studying the space station for weeks in anticipation of the moment when Connor would reach out to the astronauts at the other end of the radio.

The event was organized through the Amateur Radio on the

International Space Station, or ARISS, program.

Kiroli Elementary principal Carolyn Norris submitted an application to the program last year. The school received notification December that it had been selected to participate.

Norris credited two local amateur radio operators for assisting with the project.

Connor's dad, ULM computer science professor Paul Wiedemeier, and local physician Benson Scott assisted Kiroli

with the application.

The pair also was on hand Thursday to provide the necessary equipment and operational expertise.

Norris said it was with their help that Kiroli was able to make history.

“Kiroli Elementary is the first school in Louisiana to make contact with the International Space Station,” Norris said.

Calling an astronaut
Chatting with a ship in

orbit is not a new idea. The United States has always maintained the ability to talk to its astronauts.

But the technology necessary to contact ISS astronauts is not exactly run of the mill.

During Thursday's uplink, volunteer radio operators positioned a twenty-foot long antenna atop the Kiroli Elementary roof.

Inside, they erected a large projection screen and projected a large map of the world.

The map lent a Mission Control feel to the Kiroli auditorium, and it wasn't just for show.

The map contained two tiny dots — a stationary dot in Louisiana labeled “Kiroli,” and a small yellow dot inside of a large, triangular bubble.

The yellow dot was the International Space Station. The yellow bubble represented its radio range.

Once the yellow bubble fell over the blue Kiroli dot, students would have about 10 minutes to chat with Furukawa before the space station moved beyond radio range.

Life in Space

For about eight minutes, a dozen students asked Furukawa a series of pre-screened questions on topics ranging from diet on the space station to recreation.

Furukawa told the students he works 11 hours a day, but has plenty to do in his free time as well.

“I look out of the window and see the beauti-

ful earth,” Furukawa said. “I chat with friends and take pictures and listen to music.”

Furukawa is a Japanese physician who trained in the Japanese Space Agency and later at NASA. He landed on the space station June 9 for a five-month mission.

Though he's in for a long flight, Furukawa said he's looking forward to getting home.

“Experienced astronauts tell me it takes a while to readjust to gravity after a space flight,” Furukawa said. “I'm looking forward to experiencing that because I am a medical doctor.”

Furukawa said astronauts on the space station eat well. Furukawa added that the food is stored in food lockers and the water comes from a complicated filtration and recycling system.

According to Furukawa, virtually every molecule of water on the station is recycled for drinking. The students winced when Furukawa pointed out the recycled water included vapor from the air and astronaut urine.

When I grow up

The reality of recycled water was not enough to deter the excitement of the students, who went on to quiz Furukawa about what it takes to become an astronaut and fly in space.

“You need to study hard and get into shape,” Furukawa said. “Leadership is important and I recommend you play team sports.”

3 WAYS TO TIP ANONYMOUSLY! *Crime Stoppers*

CALL OR **CLICK** OR **TEXT** FOR **REWARD**

388-CASH CrimeStoppersTip.com Cash4 to Crimes Up to \$2,000!

THE FRANCISCAN MISSIONARIES OF OUR LADY

Invite you to attend Mass in celebration of

A Century of Faith and Service

1911-2011

Monday, October 3, 2011, 2 pm

309 Jackson Street • Monroe, LA

Mass will be held in Anna Gray Noe Park

www.stfran.com

ST. FRANCIS MEDICAL CENTER
Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System

Mound tours kick off CelticFest

CelticFest 2011 kicks off with Mound Tour Oct. 1, with guided visits to a number of ancient sites around Oak Ridge.

The tours will be part of Celtic Community Day at Starr Homeplace in Oak Ridge. There is no charge to attend the tours.

An informal car car-

van to the Indian mounds will depart Starr Homeplace at 1 p.m. Visitors are also encouraged to come take part in the Celtic Community Day celebrations, which will feature live music beginning at 11 a.m. and a family style lunch on the grounds at 12:30 p.m.

Admission to Starr Homeplace is \$5 per adult and free for children. Guests are welcome to bring a picnic lunch and lawn chairs or can take part in the family-style dining for an additional donation.

For more information, contact Joe Rolf at (318) 244-5700.

GRMC to host Think Pink Tea

Diana Jordan will be the featured speaker at the Think Pink Tea, set for 11 a.m. Friday, Oct.

7, at Glenwood Medical Mall in West Monroe.

Jordan, a comedian and best selling author

will help attendees celebrate the healing power of laughter at the fun-filled and empowering event.

Registration, shopping ad freeze modeling by Dillard's will begin at 11 a.m. A program, luncheon, tea and giveaway for door prizes will begin at noon.

Due to limited seating, reservations are required.

For information or reservations, call (877) 726-9355.

THE MULHEARN CORPORATION

FUNERAL HOMES • INSURANCE • FLOWERS • CEMETERY

Dr. Blaine M. Borders,
Cardiothoracic & Vascular Surgeon
Heart, Lung, and Vascular Clinic

- Vascular Surgery
- Aortic Aneurysm (Surgical or Endovascular)
- Varicose Vein Ablation
- Cardiac Surgery
- Lung Surgery

COLLABORATING WITH DR. BORDERS IS
RACHEL SHELBY, APRN, FNP-C

- Disease management (hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, peripheral vascular disease)
- Coumadin/blood thinner management
- Weight loss counseling
- Wellness and prevention measures for a wide variety of patients.

Heart Lung Vascular Clinic

102 Thomas Rd. Suite 205
West Monroe, LA 71291

318-329-1900 office
318-329-1901 fax

Please call 318-329-1900 to set up an appointment.
The Heart, Lung, and Vascular Clinic accepts all private insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid.