



## Author's Guide *The AMSAT Journal*

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*Editor, The AMSAT Journal*

### **First, what type of papers is *The AMSAT Journal* interested in?**

*The AMSAT Journal* is a moderately technical journal and is also an amateur satellite news/operating-oriented publication. We look for technical articles related to satellite operations such as new antenna systems, new methods of data communications, new software applications, new satellites, satellite tracking or other technical satellite projects. We also look for news about satellite-oriented operating events like Field Day, SKN, special event stations working the satellites, ARISS, satellite operating awards, international satellite operations and projects and satellite DX/Dxpedition operations. Anything of general interest to hams operating on the Amateur Radio satellites or ISS is of interest.

It's easier to write for *The AMSAT Journal* than you might think. While a well-written submission is easier for the editor to deal with, your work doesn't have to be perfect. Write your article as best you can and our editor will work with you to remove any flaws there might be. Pick a topic that you're passionate about and just start writing!

### **What we do not accept**

There are a several things that will result in immediate return of your article for additional work. A list follows:

- ♦ Profanity. Please avoid even mildly profane words such as "hell."
- ♦ Sexual content or discussions of any kind. This includes links to Web sites with sexual content or discussions.
- ♦ Depictions of violence of any kind. This includes links to Web sites that depict violence of any kind.
- ♦ Personal attacks on anyone.
- ♦ Comments demeaning to others based on gender, race, religion, age or nationality or links to Web sites with such content.
- ♦ Articles that are not original work and/or articles that are owned by other copyright holders.
- ♦ Political discussions (other than the politics of Amateur Radio or those pertaining to Amateur Radio).

### **Preparing your manuscript**

Once you have written your article you can e-mail your manuscript to [journal@amsat.org](mailto:journal@amsat.org) as a word processing file attachment. Although our editors work primarily in Microsoft Word and PageMaker, we are capable of reading other word-processing formats as well.

When preparing your electronic manuscript for e-mailing, please observe the following guidelines:

- ♦ Please do not attempt to format the document to look like *The AMSAT Journal* pages. Our page formatting software will do that automatically. Just write the text entirely across the page similar to how this document is written. That is fine and is much easier for the editor to use. Also, please don't use multiple columns on the pages. The editor just has to remove them prior to placement. If you need multiple columns for tables and so on, please advise us and we can put them into table programs available in our page layout software. In your manuscript use tabs, not spaces, to separate columns of data. Tabs provide proper alignment whereas spaces do not due to a variety of electronic typesetting reasons. Alternately, use the table function in your word processing software to create the table. Ideally those should be at the end of the article or in a separate file.
- ♦ Please do not embed images, graphics or illustrations within the text file itself. Please send text and graphics as separate files. The reason for this is that the editors must move graphics around to fit the Journal pages appropriately. Removing embedded graphics from the text and saving them separately is usually quite difficult and the resolution sometimes degrades. Also, graphics and pictures may need to be processed to make them appear

properly in the black and white/grayscale printing used by *The AMSAT Journal*. So, please send each graphic as a separate file. This allows the editor maximum flexibility for page layout.

- ♦ Please use standard nomenclature for parts, units, etc. as well as standard abbreviations. If you are in doubt about an abbreviation please go ahead and spell it out. It is easier to understand what you mean.
- ♦ When typing your manuscript please do not put two spaces after a sentence (after the period). This is a habit many of us got into when we were in typing school using old manual typewriters. With modern word processing and page layout software this only causes bad looking sentence spacing. The editors routinely remove extra spaces so please save them the time needed to do this by leaving the extra spaces out. Thanks!
- ♦ Please include captions for all tables, images, graphs and illustrations at the end of the file or in a separate manuscript file referring to each figure with an appropriate caption.
- ♦ Please make sure your name, call sign and e-mail address are included within the manuscript file, preferably at the beginning just under the title. We routinely publish your name and e-mail contact information so readers may contact you with questions.

E-mail your manuscript, charts and graphics/photos to: [journal@amsat.org](mailto:journal@amsat.org)

While not preferred, you also may send your manuscript to us by postal mail. Don't let the fact that you don't use computers discourage you! We can scan a paper manuscript and convert it to electronic format. Print or type your manuscript in double-spaced format on one side of each 8 ½ X 11 inch sheet of paper. Leave at least a ½ inch margin around all sides of the text on each page. The top of each manuscript page should have a heading. Include the author's name, a key word or two from the title and a page number. It's a very good idea to make a copy of your article before sending it to *The AMSAT Journal*. Sometimes things get lost in the mail and your work could be lost – unlikely, but it happens. The Journal editorial address is printed in the masthead on page 3 of every issue. Your article may also be mailed to AMSAT headquarters in Maryland and it will be forwarded. The headquarters address is also in the masthead.

#### **Additional information on manuscript generation**

Use standard abbreviations for text if you feel they are needed. Use other abbreviations and acronyms only after they first have been spelled out. For example: central processing unit (CPU). Then CPU may be used in the remainder of the text.

In accordance with IEEE standards, electrical units are capitalized when abbreviated and appear in lower case when spelled out. For example: "0.2 F" or "0.2 farads". Either US Standard or metric length units are acceptable, as long as one or the other is used consistently.

Place any footnote references in the text as superscript numerals. Put the footnotes and bibliographical information at the end of the manuscript in numerical order. Double-check all of your references to be sure they are correct. Include complete reference information, such as the author's name, book or article title, publisher's name and address, date of publication and page numbers so readers may refer to those if they wish.

Label all figures with a number (i.e., Figure 1 or Table 1, etc.) and place these at the end of the manuscript. Please do not insert them in the middle of the manuscript text, and do not put captions directly on the graphics themselves. Place captions below each picture. Provide a list of figures by number, along with their captions, at the end of the manuscript. Please remember to also send the graphics files separately. A separate file should be used for each graphic.

Sketches or schematic diagrams you supply should be as clear as possible. We can publish hand drawings if they are clear, but usually they will be redrawn. We can use illustrations that are already in electronic form, such as TIFF format. Or, we can redraw your figures, as long as their content is clear.

Photographs accompanying submissions can be black-and-white or color prints, color transparencies or slides. We can often use standard 3 by 5 inch prints, but enlargements are preferred because they can be scanned at higher resolution. Photos submitted with articles will be considered for use on the front cover of the Journal. Photos must be properly exposed and sharply focused. The print should possess a normal range of contrast. Prints having contrast that is too high or too low generally do not reproduce well and are hard to see.

If you take pictures, develop the prints and then scan them for submission. All photos should be scanned at 300 DPI minimum in grayscale or color to ensure maximum quality in printing. If you send electronic files they may be sent in color or in black and white/grayscale. (If you are not sure if the photo was scanned at 300 DPI, you can check to see if the image is approximately 1240-1400 pixels wide.) This will allow us to make up to a two-column (4 ½ inch wide) version for printing. Please keep in mind that you will need more pixels if your photo has a lot of detail. We prefer TIFF image files or

JPG image files direct from the camera with minimal compression. Keep in mind that if you scanned a previously printed picture it may be necessary to turn on the “descreen” function in your scanning software to eliminate Moiré patterns in the finished scan.

Photo credit information should appear at the end of picture captions, in parentheses. For example: “Bob and Joe operate AO-40 while Sara observes, from the left: Bob Jones, KB3XYZ; Joe Hamop, K7ABC; and Sara Smith, VE3ZZZ.” (WA4XXX photo.)

Concentrate on preparing a manuscript that is accurate, thorough and readable. To lure the reader into the presentation, use a descriptive and appealing title and a “deck”, or short blurb following the title. Look over recently published articles in *The AMSAT Journal* for examples. Indicate the scope of the article in its lead paragraph to encourage the reader to go further. Use relatively short sentences - ones that contain only the words necessary to convey the message. Break up the narrative occasionally with subheadings. (You can see subheadings in this document at the top of some of the paragraphs.)

After you think you have completed the article, set it aside for a day or so. Then read over the manuscript again and make any revisions that come to mind. Now is the time to correct errors such as incomplete and run-on sentences and any other mistakes that you may spot. You might even want to ask a ham friend to read the manuscript and comment on it to help you.

We prefer to receive your manuscript electronically instead of paper format to save the work of scanning or retyping the text. So if you have a computer with word processing software, please use it. We use IBM compatible PCs and Microsoft Word for most of our editing work. However, we can handle word processor files from just about any major DOS or Windows word processor in MS-DOS format on 3.5 or 5.25-inch floppy disks. If you're in doubt, send us your file in straight ASCII or in Microsoft Rich Text Format (RTF). Please use Times New Roman 10 point for the text.

### **Photographs**

We can accept color prints or slides, black and white photographs in paper format or in electronic format. It is always best to send electronic picture files in the highest resolution possible. This will allow your photos to be printed with the highest resolution our printer uses. Often lower resolution files will look “pixelated” and will not show clearly in the publication. More follows:

- ♦ We accept digital images if the resolution is sufficient. Generally speaking, this means using at least a 1.2 megapixel (or greater) digital camera with the image resolution (sometimes referred to as “image quality”) set at maximum. For digital images, the resolution should be at least 300 dpi when the image is sized at 4 X 5 inches or larger. Consult your image-viewing software. It should have a “properties” function that will give you the specifications of any image.
- ♦ All photos, digital or otherwise, must include captions. Captions may be grouped in the text file at the end or in a separate text file with all the captions together. Tell us who or what is in your photos, where they were taken, what is happening and so on. If people are shown prominently in the photographs, you should supply their names and/or call signs if applicable. Don't write directly on the front or back of paper photos – your handwriting will show up in the scans of the photos. Write or type photo credit or descriptive information on a piece of paper and tape the paper to the back of the print or use adhesive-backed notepaper (Post-It Notes®).
- ♦ Please don't send images captured from Web sites or scanned from any other source without obtaining the written permission of the owner. Photos are typically copyrighted and you (and AMSAT) could be in violation of copyright laws!
- ♦ Please don't send pictures made on color laser or inkjet printers. The resolution and quality is typically not sufficient for use. We would rather have the photo file delivered electronically.

### **Illustrations**

Sketches and/or schematic diagrams you supply should be as clear as possible so that our editor can work directly with them. If you can provide artwork drawn with CAD or other graphics programs that is ideal. If you supply schematics, provide them at the highest resolution possible, especially if there are small details.

All illustrations must include the following:

- ♦ Component labels and values (for example: C21 - .01 mF)
- ♦ Dimensions of all construction components (PVC tubes, wires, aluminum tubes, etc.)
- ♦ Text captions that clearly describe what is being shown in the graphics.
- ♦ Illustrations in AutoCad® are acceptable.

If you are an artist, we can also accept Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, PowerPoint, Visio, Corel, Encapsulated Postscript (EPS) and other types of graphics files. If in doubt we will work with you to get the image into the proper format for placement in the Journal.

### **Spreadsheet Graphics**

Keep in mind that the Journal is a black and white printed publication when you are formatting spreadsheet graphs and the like for publication. If multiple lines are on a graph in various colors they may be hard to read in black and white. Please add separate marks available in your spreadsheet program to identify individual graph lines. Also keep in mind the lighter line colors like yellow and light blue may be invisible when your graph is printed in black and white. Use solid dark colors for the lines to ensure clarity and use the various point selections available in your spreadsheet software to identify the different lines. Please provide your spreadsheet file to us if possible. The Journal editors have access to Microsoft Excel and can open and work on the formatting of your graph if needed.

### **Deadlines**

In general, Journal deadlines are as follows:

January/February issue	December 20
March/April issue	February 20
May/June issue	April 20
July/August issue	June 20
September/October issue	August 20
November/December issue	October 20

If you can get articles submitted sooner, then more time is available to edit and review. And it is more likely that your article will be published sooner. These deadlines may move some depending on a variety of issues. It's always better to submit early rather than late.

### **If your article is accepted ...**

If your article is accepted, we will notify you. The editors will schedule your article for the next available issue. When your article is ready for publication, we will e-mail a copy to you (in Adobe PDF format) or mail it to you if you do not have e-mail. Obviously e-mail is more expedient and is the preferred method. This will be your "proof" copy. Check it carefully for errors and then contact us as soon as possible with any necessary changes. At that time we may ask you to sign a release allowing us to publish your work.

### **Compensation**

AMSAT is a non-profit, volunteer organization. We do not provide compensation for articles submitted. We appreciate your efforts and contributions to the art of space communications, as do the members of our organization. Your contributions allow you to become known throughout the AMSAT community of highly skilled amateurs. You will also have the pride in having an article published in a quality, respected Journal that will be available to the Amateur Radio community for many years.

