

The SKCC Centurion

The official newsletter of the Straight Key Century Club

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Pease And Quiet At Last

Sunday 29 March will go into the records as a landmark date for the amateur radio service in the greater part of the world. Following on from the decision made during the World Radio Conference in 2003, the amateur service becomes the primary user in the HF segment between 7100 and 7200kHz in ITU and IARU Regions 1 and 3. In layman's terms, this represents everywhere except the Americas, who have always enjoyed this segment as part of the 7 to 7.3MHz allocation in Region 2. Although this date also coincides with the start of the HF broadcasting schedule, it would be naïve to think the segment might be completely clear of broadcasting stations on the start date, however a number of international broadcasters have already moved nearer to 7.5MHz. In addition, a large number of countries have reserved their position in respect to fixed service stations by way of footnotes to the relevant Radio Regulation. It is not anticipated that these stations will cause any major problems.

What's Up With The Sun?

The sun works on a pretty well known 11-year cycle of activity, all measured by sunspots and solar flares.

But like the stock market, the sunspot cycle is unpredictable. And just when astronomers thought it had hit bottom, it went lower. It has been a bear market for sunspots for many months now. That also means there have been no major space storms, which can zap satellites and threaten power grids on

Earth.

There were no sunspots observed on 266 days during 2008, or 73 percent of the time. The last year things were quieter was 1913, which had 311 spotless days. Some observers figured the solar cycle had hit bottom in 2008.

But the sunspot recession is not over. Sunspot counts for 2009 have dropped even lower, the space agency announced today.

As of March 31, there were no sunspots on 78 of the year's 90 days (87 percent).

"This is the quietest sun we've seen in almost a century," said sunspot expert David Hathaway of the Marshall Space Flight Center.

Why it matters

It matters because scientists would like to be able to predict when things will pick up, and when the next "solar maximum" will occur. At peak activity, tentatively expected in three or four years, more and more powerful solar storms up the odds of a satellite failure or a power grid malfunction.

Solar storms pack charged particles that slam into our atmosphere and, when they penetrate, can cause a cascade of failures in satellites and power systems.

A recent report by National Academy of Sciences concluded that a major storm during the next peak could cripple power grids and other communications systems and could be catastrophic, with effects leading to a potential loss of governmental control of the situation.

Other records set in 2008:

A 50-year low in solar wind pressure: Measurements by the Ulysses spacecraft reveal a 20 percent drop in solar wind pressure since the mid-1990s -- the lowest point since such measurements began in the 1960s. The solar wind helps keep galactic cosmic rays out of the inner solar system. With the solar wind flagging, more cosmic rays are permitted to enter, resulting in increased health hazards for astronauts. Weaker solar wind also means fewer geomagnetic storms and auroras on Earth.

A 55-year low in solar radio emissions that might -- or might not -- indicate weakness in the sun's global magnetic field.

A 12-year low in solar irradiance: Several NASA spacecraft find the sun's brightness has dropped by 0.02% percent at visible wavelengths and a whopping 6 percent at extreme UV wavelengths since the solar minimum of 1996.

These changes are not enough to reverse the course of global warming, the agency stated, but there are some other, noticeable side-effects: Earth's upper atmosphere is heated less by the sun and it is therefore less "puffed up." Satellites in low Earth orbit experience less atmospheric drag, extending their operational lifetimes. Unfortunately, dangerous space junk also remains longer in Earth orbit, increasing hazards to spacecraft and satellites.

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"We're experiencing a very deep solar minimum," said solar physicist Dean Pesnell of the Goddard Space Flight Center.

What's up?

All these lows have sparked a debate about whether the ongoing minimum is "weird", "extreme" or just an overdue "market correction" following a string of unusually intense solar maxima.

"Since the Space Age began in the 1950s, solar activity has been generally high," notes Hathaway. "Five of the ten most intense solar cycles on record have occurred in the last 50 years. We're just not used to this kind of deep calm."

Deep calm was fairly common a hundred years ago. The solar minima of 1901 and 1913, for instance, were even longer than the one we're experiencing now. To match those minima in terms of depth and longevity, the current minimum will have to last at least another year.

Pesnell believes sunspot counts will pick up again soon, "possibly by the end of the year," to be followed by a solar maximum of below-average intensity in 2012 or 2013.

Burghardt Stops Selling Amateur Equipment

On March 16, Jim Smith, W0MJY, owner of Burghardt Amateur Center in Watertown, South Dakota, announced that the company will no longer sell Amateur Radio transceivers and accessories. The company, now called Burghardt Radio Repair, has canceled all backorders. In an e-mail, Smith blamed the current economic conditions for the change that forced the company "to re-evaluate our goals and direction. We will continue to provide radio repair service as it has become a very busy business. Our technicians are very experienced and parts inventories are good. Thank you for your support in the past and we look forward to continuing our relationships through our servicing facility." Jim Smith's son, Mike Smith, KC0FTM, told the ARRL that even though the company has had to lay off employees in the past couple of months, "Burghardt will concentrate on service, just like we have been doing since 1973." Burghardt was founded in 1937 by Stan Burghardt, W0IT (SK), as Burghardt Radio Supply. He sold the company to Smith in 1982, remaining active in the company until January 2002. Burghardt passed away in 2004 at the age of 93.

SKCC Contest Results

SKS Sprint

March 25, 2009

Visit the SKS page <http://www.skccgroup.com/sprint/sks/> for full results.

There were 61 participants and the club call K9SKC was operated by Mark AD5WI with a score of 1219.

Category 1 – 1 Watt or less

1st Place Jack KK0I - 244 points

2nd Place Dan N4FI - 93 points

3rd Place None

Category 2 – >1 to 5 Watts

1st Place Tom KA2KGP - 294 points

2nd Place Bob VE3AKV - 260 points

3rd Place John KW4SJ - 255 points

Category 3 – >5 to 100 Watts

1st Place Bert W5ZR - 1945 points

2nd Place Russ K0LUW - 1578 points

3rd Place John N0TA - 1539 points

Category 4 – >100 Watts

1st Place Mark KJ7BS - 1097 points

2nd Place None

3rd Place None

WES Sprintathon

March 8, 2009

Visit the WES page <http://www.skccgroup.com/sprint/wes/> for full results and to see the handy work of some or our members.

There were 90 participants and the club call was not used, but Fred VE3FAL was the event special operator who scored 440 points.

Category 1 – 1 Watt or less

1st Place None

2nd Place None

3rd Place None

Category 2 – >1 to 5 Watts

1st Place George N2JNZ - 728 points

2nd Place Greg N4KGL - 653 points

3rd Place George KH5OZ - 363 points

Category 3 – >5 to 100 Watts

1st Place Russ K0LUW - 6370 points

2nd Place Dan W9DLN - 5205 points

3rd Place Mark AD5WI - 4361 points

Category 4 – > 100 Watts

1st Place Mark KJ7BS - 2238 points

2nd Place Phil KL8DX - 799 points

3rd Place John K4Bi - 355 points

New Members

5383, W1XH, Al, Chelmsford, MA
 5384, KE5HGQ, Chuck, Grand Prairie, TX
 5385, KI4JQE, Guy, Bealeton, VA
 5386, BD1CAL, Lu, Qing, Beijing, China
 5387, KE4COH, Charles, Lancaster, SC
 5388, WA1GOV, Arthur, East Taunton, MA
 5389, K1LKP, Carmen, Salem, NH
 5390, AC0IV, Dennis, Colorado Springs, CO
 5391, W1JKA, Jim, Waterville, ME

5392, W1WYS, Fred, Dalton, MA
 5393, JI4JGD, Takashi, Okayama, Japan
 5394, W7CAL, Marcus, Fallbrook, CA
 5395, K7SKI, John, Boise, ID
 5396, N6IB, Ron, Hemet, CA
 5397, M0TNY/ZB2TY, Tony, London/Gibraltar, United Kingdom
 5398, K0URN, Lance, Colorado Springs, CO
 5399, VK6GX, Phil, Gidgegannup, Western Australia
 5400, WB9OJR, Roger, Astoria, IL
 5401, KE5HGP, David, Carrollton, TX
 5402, AJ4PA, Brian, Kingston, TN
 5403, K9SJB, Steve, Madison, WI
 5404, KJ4IWZ, Dave, Cleveland, TN
 5405, KI6WPX, Kate, Pasadena, CA
 5406, KD7ATV, Eric, Vancouver, WA
 5407, W0JIG, Joe, Alamosa, CO
 5408, K1DUQ, John, Portland, CT
 5409, N3IQA, Joseph, Baltimore, MD
 5410, DJ3PP, Paul, Neustadt, W. Germany
 5411, KC8ZQW, Greg, Lima, OH
 5412, OK2MTV, Valdimir, Polanka nad Odrou, Czech, Republic
 5413, AE4SE, Curtis, Dillon, SC
 5414, W1XV, Brad, Bow, NH
 5415, K4UPG, Kelly, Orlando, FL
 5416, WA8A, Ron, Battle Creek, MI
 5417, KE5YYZ, Oscar, Edinburg, TX
 5418, KD5TMU, Harry, Lisle, IL
 5419, K2HRS, George, Mount Joy, PA
 5420, KE6BXY, Damon, Pine Grove, CA
 5421, KE6EKH, John, Burbank, CA
 5422, AB8JR, Jim, West Bloomfield, MI
 5423, VK4AQ, Ross, Innisfail, Queensland, Australia
 5424, KC2RFH, Michael, Little Falls, NY
 5425, W4SR, Greg, Salisbury, MD
 5426, N1CK, Robert, Payson, AZ
 5427, AF4XK, Chuck, Knightdale, NC
 5428, W7VH, Jon, Fall Creek, OR
 5429, W3UAL, Andy, Irvington, VA
 5430, KC5GAI, Marty, Inola, OK
 5431, WV5N, Vern, Las Cruces, NM
 5432, N4NQ, Sid, Lawrenceville, GA
 5433, N8BB, Werner, Concord, MI

SKCC Awards

Centurion

287, VE1RO, 4977C, Randall, Bass River, NS, 15 March, 2009
 288, KAØRJY, 4100C, Reg, Waseca, MN, 15, March, 2009
 289, N3WT, 4965C, John, Jefferson, MD, 15 March, 2009
 290, N4KGL, 5213C, Greg, Panama City, FL, 16 March, 2009
 291, K7VM, 3070C, Craig, Milwaukie, OR, 29 March, 2009
 292, W5ALT, 103C, Walt, Houston, TX, 29 March, 2009
 293, KD4LRP, 5114C, Rob, Fairfax, VA, 29 March, 2009

Tribune

166, KG2G, 4361C, Bert, Lakeland, FL, 13 March, 2009
 167, K0DBK, 24C, Brad, Inver Grove Heights, MN, 15 March,

2009
 168, N3JJT, 255C, Scott, Massillon, OH, 30 March, 2009

Key Of The Month



This is the key I use on CW. It's a nickel-plated 1937 Lightning that I feel fortunate to have gotten because it's in such beautiful shape. It has that great feel of a Lightning and is a pleasure to use (after I slow it down). Since coming back to CW a little over a year ago after being on phone-only for over 40 years, I've rekindled a keen interest in Vibroplexes - Love 'em! If you have some time and an interest in Vibroplexes, stop by my web site and check out my modest collection. I'm linked on QRZ.

73,

Mike, NJ3Z SKCC# 3844C

If you would like your key featured in Key of The Month, send your picture and a short description to kj7bs@cox.net.

Shack Of The Month



Shack of G2SDW.

Email pictures of your shack with a description to kj7bs@cox.net.

QSL Of The Month



Send images of your QSL card and see them posted for all members to see. Email images to kj7bs@cox.net

Member Products

Wooden Key Bases

George Osier, N2JNZ, makes beautiful key bases for your keys. "I have made bases in Redheart, Chechen and Santo Mahogany in 5/8 and 1 inch thickness. I finish the bases in Minwax Wipe On Poly Gloss which gives a great shine but doesn't make the wood look like its covered in plastic" says George. Samples of the bases are on the SKCC YAHOO group under PHOTOS and then to the N2JNZ Keys Folder. These are made from exotic woods and some are almost too pretty to drill holes into for mounting your key. Contact George gosier@twcny.rr.com for a list of exotic woods currently available. Key base pricing is \$10 each plus \$5 USPS Priority Mail shipping.

Here are two samples of his work. On the left is Redheart and on the right is Chechen.



These key bases are 8 1/2 inches long, 5 1/2 inches wide and 1/2 inch thick. These will make any key look good and will be a nice addition to your shack.

Gold SKCC Stickers

Mark Saunders, KJ7BS, is making Gold SKCC stickers available to all SKCC members. These stickers are 1 inch in diameter peel-and-stick gold foil stickers. The gold stickers come 63 to a sheet on an 8 1/2 x 11 inch page. The sticker has the SKCC key logo centered on the sticker and member numbers can be printed below the logo, including Centurion and Tribune designators. Pricing for the Gold SKCC stickers is very reasonable \$0.60 per sheet of 63 plus shipping.



- 1 sheet (63) \$1.19
- 2 sheets (126) \$2.18
- 3 sheets (189) \$2.78
- 4 sheets (252) \$3.38
- 5 sheets (315) \$4.15
- 6 sheets (378) \$4.75
- 7 sheets (441) \$5.35
- 8 sheets (504) \$6.12
- 9 sheets (567) \$6.72
- 10 sheets (630) \$7.32

(Prices include shipping)

Quantities over 10 sheets, please contact Mark for postage quote. Processing is 5-7 days excluding weekends. Orders and payments via PayPal to kj7bs@cox.net, USPS money order or check to:

Mark Saunders
13226 N. 62nd Dr.
Glendale, AZ 85304

Please include the above pricing when ordering,

The SKCC Centurion

13226 N. 62nd Dr.
Glendale, AZ 85304
Phone: 623-606-1976
kj7bs@arrl.net

With SKCC every day is Straight Key Night!

Operating Frequencies

These are the suggested frequencies (+or - Khz) for SKCC members to congregate and look for other SKCC members. These are suggestions only, nobody owns any frequency. Be courteous and find a clear spot.

1.820 MHz	3.550 MHz	3.530 MHz
7.120 MHz	7.055 MHz	10.120 MHz
14.050 MHz	18.080 MHz	21.050 MHz
24.910 MHz	28.050 MHz	50.090 MHz
	144.070 MHz	

Operating Events

Monthly 24 Hour SKCC Operating Event: The first day of each month from 0000Z to 2359Z is designated as a monthly SKCC operating event. For SKCC members and non-SKCC members to work each other for credit. Contact with 100 SKCC members will qualify that person for a certificate of accomplishment. Visit <http://www.skccgroup.com> for more info or contact n6wk@n6wk.com.

SKCC Sprint: SKCC Sprints take place each month on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 0100z to 0300z. Rules for participation can be found at <http://www.skccgroup.com/sprint/sks/>.

SKCC Weekend Sprintathon: Every Second Sunday of each month beginning at 0000z UTC and ending 2359z UTC. This operating event is open to all licensed amateurs. Periodically themes will be announced for upcoming weekend sprints. See <http://www.skccgroup.com/sprint/wes/> for more information and rules.

SKCC Member Resources

SKCC website—Everything you need to know about the Straight Key Century Club. Check back frequently as this site changes, <http://www.skccgroup.com>.

SKCC Yahoo Groups Email List—<http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/skcc/>. A moderated email list for the exchange of ideas about SKCC.

SKCC QSL Bureau—Dan Rhodes, KA3CTQ manages this free service for SKCC members. Send and receive QSL cards for QSOs between SKCC members via this service. To re-

The Straight Key Century Club is the fastest growing CW club focusing on manual generation of Morse code. Founded in January 2006, SKCC has grown to over 3700 members in calendar 2007. Members enjoy a very active email list server, SKCC forums, monthly sprints, and a monthly 24 hour operating event. Information about the Straight Key Century Club can be found at <http://www.skccgroup.com>.



ceive your QSL cards, you need to have SASE (self addresses stamped envelopes) on file with the SKCC QSL Bureau. Dan also says non-members can send you QSL cards through the SKCC Bureau. For more information see <http://www.skccgroup.com/qs1.htm>.

Award Tracker—Don Kemp, NN8B (SKCC 0036) maintains an SKCC Award Tracker spreadsheet to assist members in keeping track of their current standings with SKCC awards. Don posts updates to this valuable tool in the files section of the SKCC Yahoo Groups <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/skcc/files/>.

The SKCC Centurion—The official newsletter of the Straight Key Century Club published monthly. The SKCC Centurion is posted on the SKCC site, in the files section of the SKCC Yahoo Groups site, and distributed via email to your email inbox. To join The SKCC Centurion email list, send an email to The_SKCC_Centurion_subscribe@yahoo.com with Subscribe in the subject. (548 members subscribed to electronic delivery)

Spotting Cluster—Phil, AI4OF (SKCC # 600) has launched a spotting cluster and is making it available to SKCC members. Use this spotting cluster to announce your operations or to find other SKCC members to work. Point your Telnet client to [skcc.matrixlist.com:7300](telnet://skcc.matrixlist.com:7300). Login using your callsign.

SKCC Sked Page—Andy, K3UK (SKCC # 1325) maintains an interactive web page where SKCC members can arrange a meeting with other members to work towards SKCC awards or just to rag chew. Check it out at <http://www.obriensweb.com/skccsked/skccsked.php>.

SKCC Elmers—Jeff, K9JP (SKCC # 3008) manages the group of SKCC members serving as Elmers for the club. Anyone wishing assistance can visit the SKCC Elmers page for more information, <http://www.skccgroup.com/elmers.htm>.