

CQ CHATTER

VOLUME B9 • Issue #11 WOOD COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

December 2008

P.O. BOX 534, Bowling Green, OH

<http://wcarc.bgsu.edu>

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Secretary
Treasurer

K8OVO/K8NEA
N1RB
WD8JWJ

Don Buehrer/Duane Ashbaucher
Bob Boughton
Bill Wilkins

Kick-off Banquet Planned

The annual WCARC kick-off banquet will be held January 12, 2009, at Ben's Table restaurant, 1021 S. Main St. in Bowling Green. The menu is Margaret's Chicken, homemade mashed potatoes & gravy, peas or carrots, coleslaw, fresh baked rolls and butter. Coffee, hot tea, iced tea or soft drink included. A vegetarian chef's salad will be available as an alternate to chicken. The cost is \$15.00 per person in advance, which includes tax and gratuity. Please make reservations and payment to Bill Wilkins, WD8JWJ, by January 7, 2009. The restaurant will be closed to the public. Doors open at 06:00 with dinner at 06:30. Thanks to Bob, WB8NQW, for making the arrangements. Plan to come and renew acquaintances with a few eyeball QSOs. ■

SOLAR UPDATE

Tad "The sway of magic potent over Sun and star" Cook, K7RA, this week reports: Sunspot 1007 is still there, but probably rotating off the visible solar disk sometime today. This is the eighth sunspot of the new solar cycle -- and also the largest. Sunspot numbers for October 30-November 5 were 13, 16, 16, 17, 18, 14 and 11 with a mean of 15. The 10.7 cm flux was 66.8, 68.1, 66.7, 69.1, 69.5, 68 and 67.7 with a mean of 68.

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**WCARC Weekly Net:
Tuesdays at 2030 EST
(0130 Z Wed year-round)**

147.18 MHz 67 Hz PL

Next Meeting

Business

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8th

TIME: 7:30 pm/7:00 pm eyeball

**PLACE: Sheriff's Training Room,
Gypsy Lane and Dunbridge Rd.**

ARRL VEC Announces Exam Fee Increase

excerpted from ARRL Letter

On November 6, The ARRL VEC <<http://www.arrl.org/arrlvec/>> announced that as of January 1, 2009, the fee to take an ARRL Volunteer Examiner (VE)-administered Amateur Radio license exam will increase by \$1, from \$14 to \$15. According to ARRL VEC Manager, Maria Somma, AB1FM, ARRL VE teams may retain up to \$7 of this fee to directly reimburse their teams' out-of-pocket examination expenses; currently, VE teams keep \$6. This is the first time in four years that the examination fee has been adjusted.

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Net Check Ins

Nov 11

N8QMV (NC)

WD8ICP

K8JU

K8JI/Tom

KC8ZJW

K8NEA

K8BBK

W8PSK

K3RC

WB8NQW

N1RB

WB8VUL

K8OVO

KD8JGU (14)

Oct 14

WB8NQW (NC)

K8BBK

N8QMV

W8PSK

K8OVO

WD8JWJ

K3RC

K8NEA

WD8ICP

KD8JGU

WB8VUL

K8JU (12)

Oct 21

N1RB (NC)

WB8NQW/M

N8QMV

KC8ZJW

W8PSK

WD8ICP

WB8VUL

K8BBK

K8JU (9)

WCARC

2 m Net Control Roster

Net meets every Tuesday at 2030 EST

Dec 2	K8OVO
Dec 9	WD8ICP
Dec 16	N8QMV
Dec 23	WB8NQW
Dec 30	N1RB
Jan 6	K8OVO
Jan 13	WD8ICP

Brain Teasers

1. What is an L-network?
 - a.) network consisting entirely of four inductors
 - b.) network consisting of an inductor and capacitor
 - c.) network used to generate a leading phase angle
 - d.) network used to generate a lagging phase angle
2. What are the three major oscillator circuits often used in Amateur Radio equipment?
 - a.) Taft, Pierce, negative feedback
 - b.) Colpitts, Hartley and Taft
 - c.) Taft, Hartley and Pierce
 - d.) Colpitts, Hartley and Pierce
3. What is the easiest voltage amplitude dimension to measure by viewing a pure sine wave on an oscilloscope?
 - a.) peak-to-peak voltage
 - b.) rms voltage
 - c.) average voltage
 - d.) dc voltage

December Contests

The contest lineup for the month of December is given below. Please note that the WARC bands (60, 30, 17 and 12 m) are never open to contesting.

Dec 5-7	<i>2200 to 1600 Z</i>	160 m
ARRL 160 m 'test		CW
Dec 13-14	<i>0000 to 2359 Z</i>	10 m
ARRL 10 m 'test		all modes
Dec 13	<i>0000 to 0200 Z</i>	160 m
Russian 160 m 'test		all modes
Dec 13-14	<i>1400 to 1400 Z</i>	160 to 10 m
Croatian DX 'test		CW
Dec 27	<i>0000 to 2359 Z</i>	160 m to 2 m
RAC Canada Winter 'test		all modes
Jan 1	<i>0000 to 2400 Z</i>	160 m to 10 m
ARRL Straight Key Night		CW

December Hamfests

Dec 7 L'Anse Creuse ARC. L'Anse Creuse High School, Mt. Clemens, MI. Contact Marty, K8HVI, (586) 268-0544. k8hvi@arrl.net <http://www.n8lc.org>

Jan 10 Dial Radio Club. SW Ohio Digital and Technical Symposium. Miami University-Middletown, Middletown, OH. Contact Jay, K4ZLE, (513) 934-0235. k4zle@embarqmail.com <http://www.swohdigi.org>

Brain Teaser answers: 1-b, 2-d, 3-a

VEC--continued

Somma said that the FCC allows VECs to collect an examination reimbursement fee from each candidate who takes one or more exam elements. "VEs and VECs may be reimbursed by examinees for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in preparing, processing, administering or coordinating an examination for an amateur operator license (FCC Rule 97.527)," she said "These exam fees help the VEC recover its costs of providing its services."

Saying that every examinee at each ARRL coordinated examination session is charged the same fee in accordance with the annually-established fee schedule, "Any person sitting for an exam, or having a new license or upgrade processed at a test sessions, must pay the exam fee applicable for the calendar year," Somma explained. "The ARRL VEC's exam fee for calendar year 2009 is \$15. Each time a candidate pays one exam fee, they are entitled to take tests for Elements 2, 3 and 4 as needed, up to all three elements under the single exam fee. Each time an examinee retakes an exam element (assuming the VE Team has different exam design available), another exam fee is charged."

VE teams may elect to keep a prescribed portion of each exam fee collected exclusively to offset expenses that are directly incurred in administering the VE program. "All out-of-pocket reimbursable expenses shall be necessary and prudent, and must relate to the examination process in some way,"

Somma said. "VECs and VEs are expected to use good business judgment with respect to reimbursement amounts. The examination reimbursement fee cannot be used to offset non-session related costs and must be kept separate from other accounts." Somma pointed out that business expenses such as

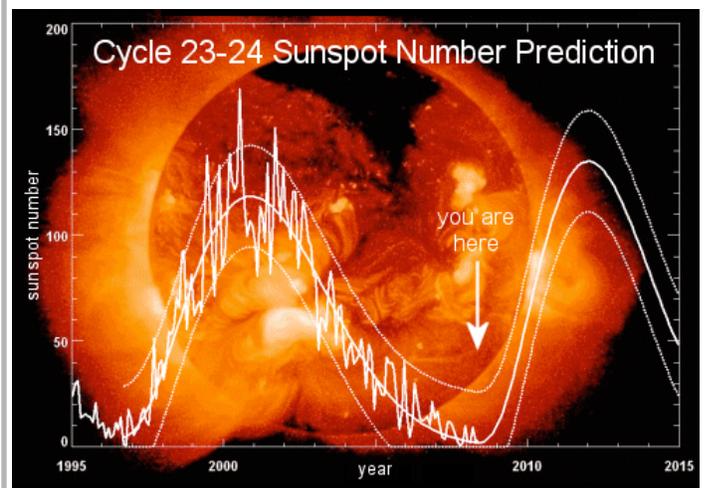
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DON'T FORGET!
10 meter informal net meets
each Sunday at 2030 EST
on 28.335 MHz

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE SUN? (NOTHING)

Stop the presses! The sun is behaving normally. So says NASA solar physicist David Hathaway. "There have been some reports lately that Solar Minimum is lasting longer than it should. That's not true. The ongoing lull in sunspot number is well within historic norms for the solar cycle." This report, that there's nothing to report, is newsworthy because of a growing buzz in lay and academic circles that something is wrong with the sun. *Sun Goes Longer Than Normal Without Producing Sunspots* declared one recent press release. A careful look at the data, however, suggests otherwise.

But first, a status report: "The sun is now near the low point of its 11-year activity cycle," says Hathaway. "We call this 'Solar Minimum.' It is the period of quiet that separates one Solar Max from another."



solar--continued

The estimated planetary A indices were 11, 6, 1, 2, 1, 1 and 0 with a mean of 3.1. The estimated mid-latitude A indices were 11, 5, 0, 2, 1, 1 and 0 with a mean of 2.9. For more information concerning radio propagation, visit the ARRL Technical Information Service Propagation page:

<http://www.arrl.org/tis/info/propagation.html>.

To read this week's Solar Report in its entirety, check out the WIAW Propagation Bulletin page:

<http://www.arrl.org/wlaw/prop/>. ■

Ever Heard of 10-10 ?

Ten-Ten International Net, or 10-10 for short, is an organization of amateur radio operators dedicated to maintaining high levels of amateur radio communications on the 10-meter amateur band (28.0-29.7 MHz). Established in 1962, 10-10 has grown continuously since that day, with some ups and downs according to the numbers of sunspots and the openness of the band. As you read this, the number of 10-10 numbers issued to members is over 75,000. 10-10 would welcome your membership in the organization if you have an amateur radio license with 10-meter privileges.

10-10 is a volunteer organization with no paid officers. Although 10-10 does contract for certain services to ensure that each member receives his or her quarterly issue of 10-10 News, the 30+ page journal of 10-10 activities, the real work of providing services for members falls on the shoulders of dedicated volunteers.

10-10 offers the 10-meter enthusiast the opportunity to share in a wide variety of activities internationally, not the least of which is meeting new and old friends. By keeping the band active through participation in 10-

10 nets, QSO parties, and certificate collection, 10-10 offers both satisfaction and challenges, while promoting learning and courteous operating practices. The combination of on-the-air activities, awards, a biannual convention, and the 10-10 News creates an unusually strong bond among 10-10 members.

Interested in becoming a member of 10-10 International? Just visit the 10-10 web site at <http://www.ten-ten.org>. Everything you want to know about the organization is on the web, including a downloadable membership application form. If you do not have computer capabilities, you can receive a copy of the *10-10 News* by writing to: 10-10 International Net, PMB 142, 643 N. 98th St., Omaha, NE 68114-2342. Please enclose \$2.00 to cover the cost of postage.

Each year 10-10 holds the Anniversary QSO Party. This event runs from January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009. Entrants work members that have the 10-10 anniversary year contained in their 10-10 number. For example: 2009 is 10-10's 47th Anniversary; therefore, one must contact members who have 47 in their 10-10 number, i.e., 47xxx, x47xx, xx47x or xxx47. Only one contact per 10-10 number and all operating modes are allowed. Operating mode must be indicated on the log submitted.

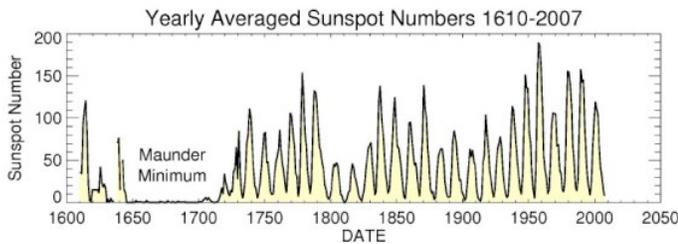
The 10-10 Winter QSO Party will be held on 0001 Z, February 7, 2009 through 2359 Z, February 8, 2009. As is the case with all 10-10 QSO parties, it is open to all; however logs can only be submitted by active 10-10 members.

Try your hand at some of these activities to see if there is any life in the 10 meter band! ■

sun--continued

During Solar Max, huge sunspots and intense solar flares are a daily occurrence. Auroras appear in Florida. Radiation storms knock out satellites. Radio blackouts frustrate hams. The last such episode took place in the years around 2000-2001.

During Solar Minimum, the opposite occurs. Solar flares are almost nonexistent while whole weeks go by without a single, tiny sunspot to break the monotony of the blank sun. This is what we are experiencing now. Although minima are a normal aspect of the solar cycle, some observers are questioning the *length* of the ongoing minimum, now slogging through its 3rd year.



"It does seem like it's taking a long time," allows Hathaway, "but I think we're just forgetting how long a solar minimum can last." In the early 20th century there were periods of quiet lasting almost twice as long as the current spell. Most researchers weren't even born then.

Hathaway has studied international sunspot counts stretching all the way back to 1749 and he offers these statistics: "The average period of a solar cycle is 131 months with a standard deviation of 14 months. Decaying solar cycle 23 (the one we had been experiencing this past year) has lasted 142 months--well within the first standard deviation and thus not at all abnormal. The last available 13-month smoothed sunspot number was 5.70. This is bigger than 12 of the last 23 solar minimum values."

In summary, "the current minimum is not abnormally low or long." The longest minimum on record, the Maunder Minimum of 1645-1715, lasted an incredible 70 years. Sunspots were rarely observed and the solar cycle seemed to have broken down completely. The period of quiet coincided with the Little Ice Age, a series of extraordinarily bitter winters in Earth's northern hemisphere. Many researchers are convinced that low solar activity,

acting in concert with increased volcanism and possible changes in ocean current patterns, played a role in that 17th century cooling. For reasons no one understands, the sunspot cycle revived itself in the early 18th century and has carried on since with the familiar 11-year period. ■

VEC--continued

postal, utility, fuel and printing charges, are increasing: "Our VE teams are feeling the effects of the current economy, too! Teams are retaining reimbursement at amounts considerably larger than previous years. The amount of out-of-pocket costs that our VEs and the VEC are expending to provide authorized services in connection with Amateur Radio operator examinations continues to rise."

Recent ARRL VEC cost-cutting steps have included staff reduction, reduced printing charges of ARRL VE training material and exam software, renegotiating shipping and printing contracts and eliminating lesser-used services. "Only so many cost-cutting measures can be justified without cutting back significantly on services essential to our VE teams, our customers and our program," Somma said. "As a result, an adjustment was needed in the 2009 exam reimbursement fee if we intended to maintain the basic levels of service that our VEs, VE teams and candidates have come to expect."

Somma said that the ARRL VEC permits its VEs to retain a portion of the exam fees they collect to directly reimburse themselves for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in setting up and conducting their examination sessions. "As long as the expense is warranted and has been prudently incurred -- and the expense is specifically related to exam administration -- then the fee can be retained," she said. ■

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