

Dxers Unlimited middle of the week edition for March 29



By Arnie Coro

Hi mis amigos radioaficionados...Let me start today's program with a question. Are you listening via short wave, or are you connected via Internet by means of our streaming audio from www.radiohc.cu ?.

I am your host Arnie Coro, radio amateur CO2KK and of course that I would like to know the answer to that question....again, are you picking up this program with a radio, or with a computer... please reply to inforhc at enet dot cu... again , send your reply to inforhc at enet dot cu. Now I am ready to start the middle of the week edition of your favorite radio hobby program...Dxers Unlimited here at Radio Havana Cuba

Here is item one...The CQ Amateur Radio Magazine worldwide WPX contest took place during the past weekend... It provided many of you with the nice opportunity of adding more DX entities and new prefixes to your logs...

This one was the radiotelephone version of the contest, something that made it easier to monitor by non radio amateurs that have access to a radio capable of picking up single side band voice signals. The contest takes place on classic HF bands ,from 1.8 to 29.7 megaHertz....so 160 , 80, 40 , 20 , 15 and 10 meters are open to participants that must abide by the well written Contest Rules...

In my opinion the way things are handled nowadays on the most prominent international amateur radio contests is significantly reducing the chances for amateurs owners of modest stations , even if they may be included among the top best contest operators... And I mean it, the use of sophisticated , very expensive equipment, at maybe fifty or perhaps one hundred fully equipped stations that compete among themselves in several categories....

So what is left for modestly equipped individual or club stations is opting for the QRP or low power categories ?.

Also to be taken into consideration is the fact that without the aid of a computer and the proper software, it is impossible to take part in any of the main amateur radio contests... and add to that if the participant does not have an Internet connection available it is impossible to send to the organizers the computer files in the specified special format required by the contest rules.

So amigos, I am advocating for creating new ham radio contests that may be accessed by participants that do not own stations costing tens of thousands of dollars, equipped with super sophisticated antenna systems that place them high and above the average station taking part in the contest... I am sure that those contests will also be a challenge to the operating skills and the antenna systems used, making possible to encourage the development of amateur radio...

Now our next item: Connected with the past weekend contest ... according to the propagation gurus in general ...

All of the indexes that are tracked were lower over the past week between March 17 and -23), compared to the previous seven days. Average daily sunspot numbers declined from 51.7 to 28.4, and average daily solar flux was 88.8, compared to 98.6 during the prior seven days. Planetary A index was lower by 3.8 points to 11.9, and average mid-latitude A index (measured in Wallops Island, Virginia) was down from 12 to 8.6.

It is a fact that lower geomagnetic indexes are generally considered a good thing for HF propagation.

Looking at the record we can see that until March 24, there were no new sunspot regions since March 17 when there was one, which followed two on the day before.

Even though our Sun is quiet, there is certainly a seasonal variation which produces aurora around the Vernal and Autumnal Equinox. (Vernal, or Spring Equinox was on Sunday, March 20, 2016 and the next Autumnal or Fall Equinox this year will occur on Thursday, September 22, 2016.)

Predicted solar flux is 88, 90, 92 and 88 on March 25-28, 90 on March 29 through April 3, 95 on April 4-11, 90 on April 12-17 and 85 on April 18-20. Flux values are predicted to go back up to 95 again after April 30.

Planetary A index for March 25-29 is predicted at 5, 8, 8, 10 and 8, then 5 on March 30 through April 1, then 30, 20 and 8 on April 2-4, 5 on April 5-7, then 10, 5, 15, 24, 22, and 20 on April 8-13, and 8 on April 14-15. The A index then jumps to 30 on April 29, something yet to be seen of course.

Hola amigos, yes this is Radio Havana Cuba broadcasting to the Americas and the Caribbean , Europe, Western and Northern Africa and also streaming our audio from www.radiohc.cu...

Here is now item three of this middle of the week edition ...

Assembling radios and accessories from kits of parts is making a nice comeback, and this is good news... The days of vacuum tubes kits are over of course, but now, a totally new generation of radios and

accessories in kit form is becoming available at moderate prices...

The new kits make possible for the hobbyists to enjoy assembling the equipment, going through themselves alignment processes and finally enjoy operating the products that they assembled.

Several of the companies selling kits provide semi-assembled elements, for example when surface mounted devices are used. The SMD' s or surface mounted devices are miniature parts that do require special tools and skills to put them on the circuit boards.

There is always time for dreaming... and I am dreaming about several very simple to assemble kits , with low parts counts and with nice looking cabinets, that will match their appearance and the performance with more expensive factory built equipment...

Among the kits I have dreamed about there are two in my high priority list... one is a simple regenerative receiver for the AM broadcast band and also covering the short wave segment from 2 to 12 megaHertz, where most of the activity will be concentrating during the next ten years or so...

The second dream is of a Regenerodyne receiver kit, that may be used as part of an amateur radio station. This second kit will need to include a well regulated power supply of the linear type, to avoid the noise problems associated with the typical switched mode units.

Finding the parts to prepare the kits, putting them in plastic bags, locate the supplier of the required cabinets and then writing and printing the most comprehensive step by step instruction manuals that most include fault finding in case something goes wrong is also essential.

My point of view is that the two simple receivers kits are within reach of many radio hobby enthusiasts, although it is true that this will require passing a learning process in skills such as soldering of electronic parts, using the digital multi meter and having the ability of detecting problems such as cold soldered joints.

I would like to hear your opinion about this topic amigos... and my main question is : Do you think that such present day radios and accessories kits are going to enjoy more popularity in the near future or not ? Send your answer to inforhc at enet dot cu , again inforhc at enet dot cu ...

Yes... Observations confirm that solar cycle 24 continues to show very weak activity as compared with any of the previous 5 solar cycles . My most recent forecast calls for us to soon be witnessing the first zero sunspots day in a long time, something due to happen before the month of June

And now as always at the end of the show, here is Arnie Coro's Dxers Unlimited 's HF propagation update and forecast. Expect more and more sporadic E openings after the end of March, and also here in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean expect tropospheric ducting to be happening all along the month of April... Solar activity continues to be very low to low. The night time maximum useable frequency curve will from now on exhibit its usual spring and summer upward swing that starts after sunset. Solar flux around 80 to 90. Please don't forget to send your signal reports and comments about this and other RHC programs to inforhc at enet dot cu ...



Radio Habana Cuba