



# KEY KLIX

Amateur Radio Club of Savannah

February 2008

Volume 4

Issue 2

---

## 2008 Club Officer Election Results

2008 ARCS Officer election results were announced at the January 10, 2008 meeting of the Amateur Radio Club of Savannah. The 2008 Club Officers will be:

Doug Rowland, KF4EFP – President  
Mac McCormick, KF4LMT – Vice President  
Andy Blackburn, WD4AFY – Secretary  
Kayton Smith, W4KTN – Treasurer  
David Delamater, K4DJD – Activities Manager  
Kurt Hoffman, N4CVF – Trustee



In addition to the Club Officer results Amateur of the Year, based on member voting, was announced. Kurt Hoffman, N4CVF was deservedly awarded the J.C. Lewis Radio Amateur of the Year Award for 2008. Kurt was also awarded a Life Membership in ARCS for his over and beyond service to the club. It has already been said plenty of times in the last few months, but Kurt has been key to the Amateur Radio Club of Savannah over the last year or so; he can't be thanked enough for his hard work and effort on both the repeaters and the club as a whole.

---

## Editor's Note

Mac McCormick, KF4LMT [kf4lmt@comcast.net](mailto:kf4lmt@comcast.net)

I would like to open by thanking Andy Blackburn, WD4AFY for his service as Key Klix editor over the last several years. Despite his busy schedule, he kept the club membership informed by keeping Key Klix on schedule. Andy will still be assisting with publication of Key Klix by converting my Word files to Adobe PDF files and publishing Key Klix on the club website. As I take over the reigns as editor, I hope to keep up the standards that he has established. I am keeping this first issue I'm working on simple; hopefully future issues won't be as "plain vanilla" as this one is. I appreciate everyone's patience as I get used to working on Key Klix once again.

I am looking forward to submissions from the ARCS membership. I will be asking for articles, commentaries, announcements, items for sale, items you may be looking for, photos, or anything else that may be of interest to the club membership. I am also hoping to include minutes of the club meetings and net control schedules. If you have anything you wish to be included in Key Klix, please email the submission to me by the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month at [kf4lmt@comcast.net](mailto:kf4lmt@comcast.net). If you have something you want to submit but need a few extra days, I don't see any reason why I wouldn't be able to accommodate you.

## ARRL News

From the ARRL Website

**New Amateur Extra Class Question Pool Released** (Dec 26, 2007) -- The National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators ([NCVEC](#)) has released the [new pool of questions for the Amateur Extra class license](#). This pool will become effective for examinations given on or after July 1, 2008, and should be in service until June 30, 2012. The pool, which consists of 741 questions and 12 graphics, can be downloaded from the NCVEC Web site in [Word](#), [PDF](#) or [RTF](#) formats. If you have any questions concerning the new Amateur Extra question pool, please contact the NCVEC's Question Pool Committee via [e-mail](#).

---

## Cycle 24 Here, Experts Say

With the appearance of [Sunspot 981](#) -- a high-latitude, reversed polarity sunspot -- on Friday, January 4, experts at NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ([NOAA](#)) said that Cycle 24 is now here. "This sunspot is like the first robin of spring," said solar physicist Douglas Biesecker of the Space Weather Prediction Center ([SWPC](#)), part of NOAA. "In this case, it's an early omen of solar storms that will gradually increase over the next few years."

Solar physicist David Hathaway of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama concurred, saying that new solar cycles begin with a "modest knot" of magnetism, like the one that appeared on December 11 on the east limb of the Sun: "That patch of magnetism could be a sign of the next solar cycle. New solar cycles always begin with a high-latitude, reversed polarity sunspot." The region of magnetism that appeared back in December achieved high latitude (24 degrees North) and was magnetically reversed, but no supporting sunspot appeared until 25 days later.

Reversed polarity means a sunspot with opposite magnetic polarity compared to sunspots from the previous solar cycle. High-latitude refers to the Sun's grid of latitude and longitude.

Old-cycle spots congregate near the Sun's equator; new-cycle spots appear higher, around 25 or 30 degrees latitude. Sunspot 981's high-latitude location at 27 degrees North and its negative polarity leading to the right in the Northern Hemisphere are clear-cut signs of a new solar cycle, according to NOAA experts. The first active regions and sunspots of a new solar cycle can emerge at high latitudes while those from the previous cycle continue to form closer to the equator.

## **Solar Cycle 24 Predictions**

While experts vary in their predictions on when the solar cycle will peak and how strong it will be, NOAA, in April 2007, in coordination with an international panel of solar experts, predicted that the next [11-year cycle of solar storms](#) "would start in March 2008, plus or minus six months, and peak in late 2011 or mid-2012." In the cycle forecast issued in April 2007, half of the panel predicted a "moderately strong cycle of 140 sunspots, plus or minus 20, expected to peak in October 2011. The other half predicted a moderately weak cycle of 90 sunspots, plus or minus 10, peaking in August 2012. An average solar cycle ranges from 75 to 155 sunspots. The late decline of Cycle 23 has helped shift the panel away from its earlier leaning toward a strong Cycle 24. The group is evenly split between a strong and a weak cycle."

NASA's Hathaway, along with colleague Robert Wilson at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco last month, said that Solar Cycle 24 "looks like it's going to be one of the most intense cycles since record-keeping began almost 400 years ago." They believe the next solar maximum should peak around 2010 with a sunspot number of 160, plus or minus 25. "This would make it one of the strongest solar cycles of the past fifty years -- which is to say, one of the strongest in recorded history." Four of the five biggest cycles on record have come in the past 50 years. "Cycle 24 should fit right into that pattern," Hathaway said.

## **Amateur Radio and Solar Cycle 24**

According to Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, "As for improvement in propagation on the higher bands, we still have a way to go before that happens, and it depends on the magnitude of Cycle 24. The Solar Cycle 24 Prediction Panel has published predictions for Cycle 24, but unfortunately the panel did not reach one consensus prediction. If the larger of the two predictions comes true, we should expect consistent F2 propagation on 10 and 12 meters to start toward the end of 2009. If the smaller prediction comes true, this will be delayed about one year."

Luetzelschwab, who writes the column "Propagation" for the *National Contest Journal* ([NCJ](#)), continued: "While we wait for improved high band conditions, don't forget the low bands. Around solar minimum and for the next year or so, the Earth's geomagnetic field is at its quietest. This is good for low band propagation. Thus, right now is the time to start (or add to) your 80 and 160 meter [DXCC](#) efforts."

## **Active Solar Cycles Bring Sunspots, Solar Storms**

A [sunspot](#) is an area of highly organized magnetic activity on the surface of the sun, and is marked by a lower temperature than its surroundings. The new 11-year cycle, called [Solar Cycle 24](#), is expected to build gradually, with the number of sunspots and solar storms reaching a maximum by 2011 or 2012, though devastating solar storms can occur at any time

While sunspots are good news to Amateur Radio operators, an active solar cycle can disrupt other aspects of life that we take for granted, since violent eruptions occur more often on the

Sun during an active period. According to NASA, solar flares and vast explosions, known as [coronal mass ejections](#), shoot energetic photons and highly charged matter toward Earth, jolting the planet's ionosphere and geomagnetic field, potentially affecting power grids, critical military and airline communications, satellites, Global Positioning System ([GPS](#)) signals and even threatening astronauts with harmful radiation. These same storms illuminate night skies with brilliant sheets of red and green known as [auroras](#), or the northern or southern lights.

NOAA Administrator and Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere Vice Admiral (Ret) Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr said, "Our growing dependence on highly sophisticated, space-based technologies means we are far more vulnerable to space weather today than in the past. NOAA's space weather monitoring and forecasts are critical for the nation's ability to function smoothly during solar disturbances."

According to NASA's Tony Phillips, many forecasters believe Solar Cycle 24 will be big and intense. Solar cycles usually take a few years to build to a frenzy and Cycle 24 will be no exception. "We still have some quiet times ahead," says Hathaway.

## Announcements

### **Coastal Amateur Radio Society Antenna Class**

February 5, 2008 at 7:00 PM

White Bluff Presbyterian Church Education Building  
10710 White Bluff Rd

*For further information contact Steve Jonas, K4SDJ at 355-6522 Home, 667-4948 Cell, or [k4sdj@comcast.net](mailto:k4sdj@comcast.net)*

### **Extra Class License Classes**

Every Monday in February beginning February 4, 2008 from 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM

White Bluff Presbyterian Church Education Building  
10710 White Bluff Rd

*For further information contact Steve Jonas, K4SDJ at 355-6522 Home, 667-4948 Cell, or [k4sdj@comcast.net](mailto:k4sdj@comcast.net)*

### **Tybee Island Marathon**

Amateur Radio Operators are needed to provide communications for the Tybee Island Marathon on February 2, 2008. The race will begin at 8:00 PM and will be over by 2:00 PM. *For more information or to volunteer for the event contact Steve Jonas, K4SDJ at 355-6522 Home, 667-4948 Cell, or [k4sdj@comcast.net](mailto:k4sdj@comcast.net)*

---

## IT'S ARCS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

It's that time again...time to renew your membership and support of the Amateur Radio Club of Savannah. Individual membership dues are \$30 and Family membership is \$40. Your support goes towards paying for the upkeep of the repeaters, paying the insurance, the P.O. Box, postage, and other misc. items during the year. Please send your check to the P. O. Box or give it to the treasurer before the March 31 deadline.

---

## Local Area Nets

**Amateur Radio Club of Savannah 2 Meter Net:** 146.970, Thursdays at 9:00 PM

**Skywarn/Effingham County ARES Net:** 146.745 (CTCSS 97.4), Tuesdays at 9:00 PM

*If you would like your net listed in Key Klix, please contact with me the information at [kf4lmt@comcast.net](mailto:kf4lmt@comcast.net)*

---

## AMATEUR RADIO CLUB OF SAVANNAH

The Amateur Radio Club of Savannah, was founded in 1938, and is a non-profit 501(c)(3)(a) organization dedicated to:

- . (a) Recognition and enhancement of the value of the amateur service to the public as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.
- . (b) Continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art.
- . (c) Encouragement and improvement of the amateur service through rules which provide for advancing skills in both the communication and technical phases of the art.
- . (d) Expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of trained operators, technicians, and electronics experts.
- . (e) Continuation and extension of the amateur's unique ability to enhance international goodwill.

Key Klix is a publication of the Amateur Radio Club of Savannah Copyright 2008