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ARLP053 Propagation de K7RA

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QST de W1AW  
Propagation Forecast Bulletin 53 ARLP053  
>From Tad Cook, K7RA  
Seattle, WA December 27, 2013  
To all radio amateurs

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This is the last propagation forecast bulletin of 2013. In the first bulletin of 2014 we will review the previous year, and look at some averages to give us perspective on the current Solar Cycle 24.

Solar activity declined somewhat this week. The average of daily sunspot numbers retreated nearly 21 points from 134.4 to 114.6, and average solar flux was off nearly 21 points to 138.8. Geomagnetic indices were quiet.

These comparisons are between the recent seven day reporting period and the previous week, December 12-18, 2013.

Predicted solar flux according to the most recent forecast on Thursday, December 26 from NOAA/USAF is 125 on December 27-28, then 130, 135 and 140 on December 29-31, then 145, 150, 155, 165, 170, 175 and 170 on January 1-7, 165 on January 8-10, 155 on January 11-15, and 150 on January 16-17. Solar flux is predicted to drop to a low of 125 on January 22-25, and peak at 175 on February 2.

Predicted planetary A index is 7 on December 27, 5 on December 28 through January 2, then 10 and 20 on January 3-4, then 5 on January 5-9, then 15 on January 10, and 5 on January 11-20, then 10 and 8 on January 21-22.

F.K. Janda, OK1HH shares his geomagnetic predictions this week, and sees quiet to active conditions December 27, mostly quiet December 28, quiet to unsettled December 29, active to disturbed December 30, quiet December 31 and January 1, mostly quiet January 2-3, active to disturbed January 4, quiet to unsettled January 5, quiet January 6-9, quiet to unsettled January 10, quiet to active January 11, quiet to unsettled January 12, and mostly quiet January 13-17.

Don Kalinowski, NJ2E of Cary, North Carolina sent us a tip on space weather coverage by the British Met (Meteorological) Office, which will begin in Spring 2014. You can read about it here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-25517466>

And here:

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/news/releases/archive/2013/space-weather-forecasts>

Don also sent a link to this interesting video from NASA:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KS57VH3QN1g>

Rich Zwirko, K1HTV of Amissville, Virginia sent this interesting report:

"Saturday, December 21 had some very interesting conditions on the higher HF bands. I was watching solarham.com around 1545 UTC and noticed a sharp peak in the density (proton?) reading on the ACE solar wind real time display. I switched to 10 meters and found 3W1T in Vietnam with a strong signal on CW coming in via long path from the south. In a few minutes he was in the log. That was around 1545Z.

"His signal continued to build to almost S9 on the K3 S meter over the next 15 minutes. I called Ed again on CW with my 100W, asking if he could switch to SSB, but he said that he had to QRT in a few minutes. I then switched to 15 meter SSB with the beam east and worked VK4WIL via the long path. Contacts were also made with a number of stations in the southern half of Africa.

"Later in the day around 2345Z VK6WX, with a great long path signal, was easily worked on 20 meter SSB. Then in the next 45 minutes QSOs were made with three stations in the Antarctic region on 20 meter CW, all with what seemed to be greatly enhanced signal strengths. On the other hand, signals via the northern polar path were almost non-existent at the K1HTV QTH. Go figure!"

Thanks, Rich!

Log into <http://www.qrz.com> and take a look at the K1HTV profile, full of interesting history for this active ham, 55 years on the air.

Larry Godek, W00GH of Gilbert, Arizona wrote on December 21:

"Today listening to the KSM CW transmission on 16.914 Mc out of Point Reyes, California, I am hearing echoes between the characters.

Sometimes it's hard to determine the characters as the echo is as strong as the direct or reflected signal. Wonder if anyone else heard the same thing?

"10 meter FM has been going strong all day with signals from the East Coast in here solid on 29.620 MHz through KQ2H in New York City. Hearing South American stations quite well. Also this year I've heard the VE2TST repeater in Ottawa an awful lot whereas in the past years it's been very seldom heard.

"Lots of signals on the bands for the RTTY contest. Hope they have a banner weekend."

The KSM transmissions are from a former commercial marine radio site at Point Reyes, Bolinas, California in Marin County north of San Francisco. KSM is on the air occasionally to commemorate the old high seas CW operations of years past. Read about it here: <http://www.radiomarine.org/>

Peter Gambée, K6TTD of Sacramento, California sent this on December 20:

"I am located near downtown Sacramento, California. I did get on the air much too briefly during the 10 meter contest, for about an hour all together. Family and holiday shopping took precedence. I had the rig on in the background throughout, and was able to hear (sometimes see on CW Skimmer) what was happening, which only made sitting on the sidelines more painful. Conditions were outstanding on 10 throughout the contest from all I heard and saw.

"During the hour I was on, I wasn't competing. I spent my time 'scooting and pouncing' on new DXCC entities and bands. I only logged about a half dozen brand new DXCC entities, and chocked up about a dozen or so new-band DXCC QSOs. The majority of these were in Central America, South America and Asia. Europe and

Africa seemed to be just out of reach as I wasn't able to get on the air when they were solid into Northern California.

"So far during this 'second peak' of Cycle 24, I have logged 175 new DXCC entities and now have over 100 DXCC confirmed. What has REALLY blown me away is that my linear has been idle for many of those contacts. In all but the most ugly pileups, I've been working DX with 15-30 watts.

"Lately I have been starting out with 15 watts and working my way up depending on conditions. Not that 30 watts is QRP by any means, but I'm still blown away with what I've been able to do barefoot, usually on the first or second call.

"I fell into this pattern completely by accident. I finished a QSO with my first station in China a few weeks into the current peak, only to realize that my linear was off and I was only running about

15 watts out! Just to see if it was dumb luck, I stuck with 15 watts and made several additional QSOs with new DXCC throughout Asia.

Been going with the flow ever since.

"I still have the security blanket of a linear when conditions get really rough, as they likely will sooner than we would all like, but running sub-100 watts has been a kick. I will be giving REAL QRP a shot ASAP, before the SSN drops down.

"Some of my bigger surprises so far: V63XG Micronesia (15w), ZM90DX Auckland and Campbell (15w), RU0ZM/0 Asiatic Russia (15w), ZS9MADIBA South Africa (30w), BA8AG China (20w) and XV2LRR Vietnam (20w)."

Thanks, Peter! Great report. Back when I was a teenaged WA7CSK in 1966, W7OE inducted me into QRP Amateur Radio Club International (#2656), and they considered 100 watts and below as QRP. These days

5 watts or less is generally considered QRP, but in the early seventies if I recall correctly 5 watts or less was referred to as QRPP.

We heard from Pavel Milanes Costa, CO7WT of Camaguey Cuba. He wrote, "Hi, I'm CO7WT from Cuba, and today I had a curious experience on 12 meters.

"I sit down in my shack and begin to call on 24.950 MHz around 1:00 PM local (1600 UTC) and the band was so-so, but using the

CQRLOG software in Linux with the world map showing the approximate place of each station I note what can be called as a skip ribbon or skip zone moving away westward.

"Beginning on the East Coast of US with little stations in the mid US, and no California at all, then around 1 hour later some stations entering from the west coast and strong signals from the middle US and fading signals from the East Coast (skip zone moving west) and then strong stations coming from California and even two Alaska stations, and NY stations popping strong on the radio again.

"Funny, I have 15 years+ as a ham and I have never seen propagation this way. It may be because I have no way to see the other station's position before, and now with this software I can note curious effects like this.

"The result of the almost 4 hours sit down in front of the radio was 200+ contacts scattered all over the US, including Alaska, and 3 PY (Brazil) and one FM4 (Martinique) on SSB.

"Just to share an experience, and surprise of the discovery. We never stop learning!

"Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

"73 de CO7WT, Pavel"

If you would like to make a comment or have a tip for our readers, email the author at, k7ra@arrl.net.

For more information concerning radio propagation, see the ARRL Technical Information Service web page at <http://arrl.org/propagation-of-rf-signals>. For an explanation of the numbers used in this bulletin, see <http://arrl.org/the-sun-the-earth-the-ionosphere>. An archive of past propagation bulletins is at <http://arrl.org/wlaw-bulletins-archive-propagation>. More good information and tutorials on propagation are at <http://k9la.us/>.

Monthly propagation charts between four USA regions and twelve overseas locations are at <http://arrl.org/propagation>.

Instructions for starting or ending email distribution of ARRL bulletins are at <http://arrl.org/bulletins>.

Sunspot numbers for December 19 through 25 were 138, 137, 131, 111, 108, 96, and 81, with a mean of 114.6. 10.7 cm flux was 153.4, 149.2, 144.2, 137.9, 136.1, 128.3, and 122.7, with a mean of 138.8.

Estimated planetary A indices were 5, 6, 4, 3, 3, 2, and 7, with a mean of 4.3. Estimated mid-latitude A indices were 4, 6, 4, 2, 2, 2, and 6, with a mean of 3.7.

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