

Natural Radio

News, Comments and Letters About Natural Radio

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Sunspot Cycle 24 has really come to life as Sunspot 1158 unleashed the strongest solar flare in more than four years. This X2 eruption on February 15 produced some nice Aurora activity at high latitudes, but the associated CME only produced minor terrestrial magnetic disturbances.

However, the flare did cause major disturbances in the news media with headlines like, *Space Weather Could Wreak Havoc In Gadget-Driven World*, *Space Storms Threaten Technology* and *Scientists Warn of \$2000 Billion Solar 'Katrina'*. It was obvious that most of the news writers barely skimmed the NASA and NOAA source material and didn't even make a basic effort to attempt an understanding of what was written. No wonder the general public has such little trust in science.

Later that week, on the 18th, region 1161 erupted, producing an M6.6-class solar flare. Again, this almost-X category blast was one of the strongest flares in years and continued the week-long trend of high solar activity. There didn't appear to be a CME associated with the event, so much to the chagrin of the news media, no satellites fell from the sky and the entire US power grid did not go down.

Earlier today there was a series of 7 C-Class flares, so it looks like we are well into the upside of cycle 24 and some interesting Natural Radio activity. Unfortunately, I didn't get a chance to go out and do any listening as I was dealing with a bad float in my outside sump pump. This pump resides in a 9 ft. deep pit in the front of the house and drains the footing tile around the outside of the house. The float was sticking in the on position and I needed to periodically bang it with a 10 ft. piece of PVC pipe so that the pump wouldn't burn out by running continuously. On Saturday, I was able to pull the pump out and replace the float, which I seem to be doing about once a year. I'll be doing an autopsy on the bad float to try and figure out why they keep failing.

Sun-Earth Day 2011 – NASA will celebrate Sun-Earth Day on March 19, 2011. Sun-Earth Day is comprised of a series of programs and events that occur throughout the year culminating with a celebration on or near the Spring Equinox. This is a great resource for educators, but it's also a good starting point if you want to increase your knowledge of Sun-Earth interactions and how they affect Natural Radio and the technology we all have become so attached to. I encourage you to check out the site at <http://sunearthday.nasa.gov/2011/>.

Building a VLF Observatory – Renato Romero has recently added three excellent articles to his *Radio Waves Below 22 kHz*. website at <http://www.vlf.it/>.

- How to Start Up a VLF Observatory
- How to Put a VLF observatory Online
- Create Your Own Streaming VLF Audio Program

These are really well written "How-To" articles for those wishing to take the Natural Radio hobby to the next level. They contain superb insight from one of the top Natural Radio observers.