

The Pileup

Newsletter of the CDXA

Presidential Ponderings

As I start this month's column, the South Georgia group has closed down their operation, several others are starting up and the last arrangements for the Charlotte Hamfest are being undertaken. Over the last couple of years, CQ Magazine has pointed out the need for an active working ham station at hamfests. Many of the attendees are either VHF handi-talkie types or people who are interested in ham radio, but not yet licensed. The addition of an HF station would introduce both groups to the fun of HF. CDXA is going to make a small step in that direction this year to create a special event within the Hamfest. More news later after some details get worked out. We hope to set up an HF station in the CDXA booth.

As we've pointed out before, the hamfest is being co-sponsored by ICOM and Heil Sound. Bob Heil will be giving a couple of forums this year and introducing several new products. His first hamfest was Charlotte's—20 years ago. Ten-Tec will be present and introducing a new HF rig called the Orion. This is the first time in many years that Ten-Tec has visited the Charlotte hamfest.

- W4WNT Bill Turner President
- W4JG Jack Guion Vice-Pres.
- W4NZC Ken Cannaday Sec.-Treas.
- K4MD Joe Simpkins Cluster Mgr.
- Lloyd Burt Webmaster
- K8YC John Scott Editor

This issue of the Pileup comes with an addressed envelope for you to return your dues, \$15 for those who do not use the PacketCluster, and \$30 for those of you who are regular cluster users. Oh, by the way, please let us know if your mailing address, e-mail address or telephone number has changed when remitting your dues.

The usual CDXA Hamfest Dinner this year will be on Saturday night, with a new location. Valentino's has moved to Old Pineville Road, off Woodlawn Avenue in Charlotte—not far from our Shoney's luncheon site. We'll have maps available at the CDXA booth at the Hamfest. Valentino's can be reached from the Hamfest site by going West (North on a map) on Independence (US-74) to the Belk Freeway (I-277, South), thence west keeping downtown to the right to I-77, then south on I-77 to Woodlawn Road (Exit 6A). Go east on Woodlawn two traffic lights to Old Pineville Road. Valentino's is just north of a Citgo station at the intersection of Woodlawn and Old Pineville Roads.

Lastly, allow me to congratulate Joe Blackwell, AA4NN, who just received a certificate for winning his class in South Carolina in the 2000 CQWW 160m contest in CW. He posted 800 QSOs yielding 145,875 points using the WY2000 callsign. Great job, Joe.

73, Bill, W4WNT

CDXA PacketCluster & Other Communication Systems		
W4DXA Young Mountain	144.93 MHz (1200 bits/second)	441.00 MHz (9600 bits/second)
K4MD Charlotte, NC	144.91 MHz (1200 bits/second)	441.075 MHz (9600 bits/second)
Digipeater near Wingate, NC	144.91 MHz (DXWIN)	
CDXA Repeater 147.18 MHz (+600)	W4DXA, Near Fort Mill, SC	
World Wide Web Homepage	www.cdxa.org	
Wednesday Luncheon (11:30 AM)	Shoney's, 355 Woodlawn Road, Charlotte, NC (704-525-4395)	

Roving Reporter Hits The Road Again

The Roving Report took to the road in January to mosey over to Terrell, North Carolina and track down Paul Sturpe, W3GQ. PacketCluster users who live north of Charlotte will recognize Paul as the guy who works so hard to keep the W4DXA node alive and well.

Roving Reporter: How did you come by that 3-land callsign, Paul?

W3GQ: Actually I was licensed in Ohio as KN8EVK in 1957, subsequently K8EVK when I upgraded to Technician, then General Class. My job took me to Pennsylvania in the 1960s. In those days, your callsign had to reflect the call area in which you lived so I became a 3-lander. Later I took the 1x2 call when I upgraded to Extra in 1977.

RR: Whoa, let's back up a bit to 1957. How did you get interested in ham radio?

W3GQ: A friend of mine and I found an old crystal set in an attic, and we began to mess around with it. I mentioned this to another friend who told me he was a ham radio operator. One thing led to another, and I decided to get licensed.

RR: I understand you were an airline pilot in your working career. Did you take up radio because you wanted radio experience as a pilot, or did you take up flying because you enjoyed using a radio? (Tongue in cheek!)

W3GQ: Silence. (Thinking, "who is this dingbat reporter, anyway"?)

The Pileup

Official Newsletter of the Carolina DX Association
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Published monthly 10 times per year, excluding the months of June and December.

The purpose of the association is to secure for the members the pleasures and benefits of the association of persons having a common interest in Amateur Radio.

Members of the CDXA shall adhere to "The Amateur's Code" as published from time to time in *The ARRL Handbook for Radio Amateurs*, and shall consist of those valid licensed amateur operators having an interest in promoting amateur radio. Long distance communications (DX) is of special interest to members of the association, but said interest is not a requirement of membership.

Dues are \$30 per year for those using the PacketCluster maintained by the Association, \$15 otherwise, payable each January. Dues are payable by check to the Secretary/Treasurer:

Ken Cannaday, W4NZC
1929 Ewing Avenue
Charlotte, NC 28203

RR: Have you been active in radio all through the years, and how long have you been a DXer?

W3GQ: Like many hams, I've had periods of reduced activity—starting my career, having children, and the like—but I've been steadily active most of my life. When first married, I didn't have much equipment, so my hamming took a hiatus for a while. I had done some DXing, and I earned DXCC about 10 years ago with a little more than 100 entities, but I got more serious about chasing DX when I retired a few years ago.

RR: How's your chase going?

W3GQ: At last count, I have 306 confirmed.

RR: Wow!! I didn't think there had been that many entities on the air that you could confirm almost 200 new ones in that time period. What kind of antenna are you using?

W3GQ: A 2 element, five band cubical quad at 56 feet. I also have a few dipoles hanging up in the yard. The quad is a Lightning Bolt, manufactured in Pennsylvania. I homebrewed my own first quad using locally fabricated "spiders" and bamboo, and I felt it did a pretty good job, so I've stuck with quads.

RR: I noticed in February's CQ Magazine you were awarded WAZ certificate #8086. Congratulations, that's one of the better ones.

W3GQ: Thanks. I'm not much of an award chaser, but did notice I qualified for that one, so I sent in my QSL cards.

RR: How did you get started working on the PacketCluster?

W3GQ: From time to time, I'd been having troubles with spontaneous disconnects from the node. This problem nearly drove N4ZC crazy when he was managing the northern node. I started asking K4MD a few questions, and I guess I made myself a candidate for the job by showing some interest. After that I was "drafted"!

RR: Well from all I've heard you've been acting more like an enlistee from the interest you've shown. All of those using the W4DXA node will agree. Thanks, Paul, for taking on that task. 73.

Heil Sound Returns to Charlotte for 20th

Twenty years ago this year, Bob Heil showed off a few of the very first microphone elements his company produced for Amateur Radio at the Charlotte Hamfest. With 100,000 units of production behind him, Bob returns to Charlotte this year with new products and a fine presentation called, *"The Science of Audio."* Heil knows audio. He earned his stripes as the audio consultant for some of the worlds finest "rock" bands. Don't miss seeing either the presentation or the new product. After several years of planning, designing and tooling, the new PRO-SET PLUS competition headset will have its first public showing at the Charlotte Hamfest.

The PRO-SET PLUS is one of six new products being introduced in 2002 to celebrate the anniversary. Several of the leading contest clubs and DX operations provided their 'wish lists' for the ultimate headset. The PRO-SET PLUS is reported to answer every request on the list—and then some! Features include:

- o HC-5 full range and HC-4 DX mic elements included.
- o Maximum comfort with new huge, soft ear pads.
- o Self adjusting headband.
- o Acoustically tuned speaker cavities for gorgeous audio.
- o Heavy duty industrial cable system.
- o 180 degree boom swing for left or right ear use.
- o Speaker phase reversal switch improves audio "presence" for signals in a pileup!
- o Foam microphone windscreen and washable cotton ear pad-covers to "refresh" your headset after that weekend contest operation.

Come see Bob Heil and the new headset at the Charlotte Hamfest. Look for the CDXA booth, too.

Items for Sale

Bob Burton, N4PQX, has the following items for sale. Contact Bob directly if interested.

- o Mosley Pro 57B - \$325 (5 band tribander, 24' boom)
- o Cushcraft 230WB - \$175 (two 15 element 2m beams with stacking kit for vertical or horizontal polarization)
- o Cushcraft AR-270B - \$65 (2m/440 vertical ~9' tall)
- o Kantronics 9612Plus and Phoenix 440 radio combo, setup for CDXA packetcluster - \$350

The following items formerly used by CDXA for its PacketCluster operation are for sale:

- o External IOMEGA ZIP Drive (100 Mb) - \$45
- o 440 MHz Hustler G-6 Antenna - \$75

Please contact **Roger Burt**, N4ZC for details.

A Few Words On DXing 101

By Don Daso, K4ZA

Occasionally, you come across a book, a magazine or article, or some document truly worth sharing. So it is with AC6V's new book, DXing 101. Rod Dinkins, whose callsign you may recognize from his website <http://ac6v.com> (perhaps the single best DX-oriented site going), spent several years as a technical writer for HP. So, with that background, his long-running website, and his own DXing experience behind him, and in response to requests for a "beginners" book, Rod created DXing 101. Sub-titled "The Amateur Radio DX Reference Guide," his book is just that—a reference work. It's loose-leaf bound, allowing timely up-dates, and contains over 160 pages of material as well as around 50 pages of appendices and a glossary. The glossary is something every ham radio publication ought to have, including web-sites. Rod has covered all the bases! From the new ham to the old guard crowd, there's something for everyone. Of course, one book cannot possibly cover each and every topic completely, but Rod's compilation, and the answers to oft-asked questions along with all the references contained therein, make his book a terrific bargain.

Eight chapters cover the gamut of DX activity, and the numerous appendices have a compendium of useful information. If someone ever asked you to explain what you do as a DXer, this book will do it. There's information useful to everyone, including a section on the value of the Internet to DXers.

DXing 101 is available from AC6V: Rod Dinkins, 4982 Marin Drive, Oceanside, CA 92056 for \$19.95. If you'd like to query Rod before buying, write to the above address, or via e-mail using: ac6v@amsat.org. Excerpts can be examined at: <http://ac6v.com/DXSAMPLE.htm>.

(Don has graciously made a copy of the book available as a giveaway to a young, new General Class (or above) licensee identified at the Charlotte Hamfest. —The Editor.)

Ten-Tec Coming To Charlotte Hamfest

The following news release came to me via Ted Goldthorpe regarding Ten-Tec's scheduled presence at the Charlotte Hamfest to introduce a new radio called the Orion.

Thought it might be time for some comments from Ten-Tec directly about the ORION. The ORION will be a completely new, ground-up design top-of-the-line HF transceiver from Ten-Tec. We anticipate the retail price will be in the \$3,300 range.

ORION will be a true dual receive HF transceiver. We anticipate that the receiver performance will exceed the Omni-VI Plus and all of the currently available Japanese HF transceivers.

Main receiver is amateur radio bands only, utilizing both analog and IF-DSP stages, 10-160 meters. Sub receiver is IF-DSP, general coverage.

Cosmetics are still being finalized. The transceiver will use an LCD display screen similar to the Jupiter but larger and not the same color background display. Case color will be black.

Transmitter is 100 watts output. There will be a number of new features on ORION that haven't been found on anyone else's previous rig. We can't release complete details on these until the specs are finalized.

There is no estimated delivery date, other than it will be available sometime later in 2002. We plan to introduce and show the new rig at the Charlotte Hamfest on March 9-10 and at Dayton Hamvention in May. By then, we should have feature and spec information to distribute about the new rig. We are VERY excited about this new product.

*Scott Robbins, W4PA
Ten-Tec Amateur Radio Product Manager*

Your editor made a call to Sevierville to Scott Robbins to get a few more details on the new rig. The ORION will definitely not have a 6 meter section. Scott asserts that having a VHF IF stage would not be consistent with a low-noise receiver design. With two separate receivers on board, the ORION will provide several options for stereo headset connections to permit listening to both sides of the pileup when the DX is operating split frequency. Ten-Tec chose Charlotte as a hamfest which gets a lot of traffic, yet is not so big as to get lost among the hundreds of booths. See you at the Ten-Tec booth!

New IRCs are Here!

There seems to be a lot of misinformation regarding the new International Reply Coupons. Bob Burton, N4PQX, wrote an email to the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union and received the reply below. —The Editor.)

The UPU's International Bureau has distributed about six million of the new International Reply Coupons since November 2001 to over 70 countries that have until now ordered them. A total of 10 million coupons were printed for the change-over to the new IRCs, which came into effect at the beginning of January 2002.

The IB has received many requests from customers, and in particular philatelists and radio amateurs, who wish to purchase coupons. Philatelists are particularly interested in the old coupons. The IB has pointed out that it does not sell ICRs directly to customers and that they have to buy them from their local post office. Although all Posts are not obliged to sell ICRs, it is mandatory for all Posts of the UPU member countries to exchange coupons. The value of the new ICRs are set at the equivalent of 0.74 SDR but each country determines its own selling price in accordance with the postage corresponding to an unregistered overseas priority airmail letter of the first weight step.

Although 31 December 2001 was the last date on which post offices could sell the old IRCs, they remain valid for exchange indefinitely. Posts have until 30 September 2002 to return old stock to the IB. The new IRCs will be valid 31 December 2006.

I may add that the USA has ordered the new IRC's. They should be on sale now.

Yours sincerely,

Akhilesh Mathur
Mail Programme Manager
International Bureau of the UPU

Thanks, Bob, for taking the bull by the horns and cutting to the chase!!!

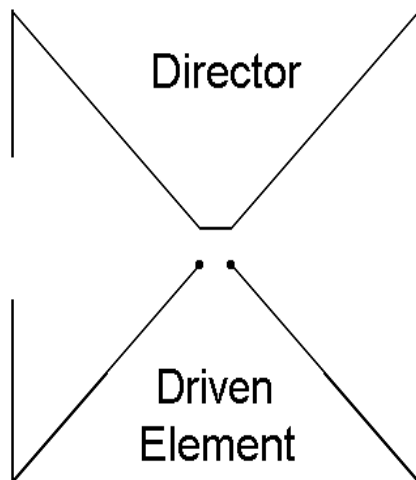
Homebrewing Antennas

By John Scott, K8YC

With all the modern rigs and exciting new features inherent with microprocessor controlled radios, it seems as if homebrewed transmitters and receivers are going the way of the buggy whip. Yet, antennas, as one of the most important parts of the station provide a fertile area in which homebrewing survives.

In the early 1990s I encountered a ham in Texas who extolled the virtues of folded X-Beams. He claimed he'd built several of them, and each had worked well beyond expectations. A referenced QST article was retrieved and saved for a future project. Move ahead to 2001, when I ran into the same ham on the air again. He still loved his X-Beam. Rodney Harper and I decided to build an X-Beam and mount it on a short tower at his house. Most of the parts were available from my nearby Lowe's Home Products store. The aluminum tubing took some searching, but I finally found a source in Stock Car Steel near Mooresville. The X-Beam has a geometry like that pictured below. It's design philosophy is for a minimum turning radius, light weight, gain antenna.

A few questions came up during construction, and we



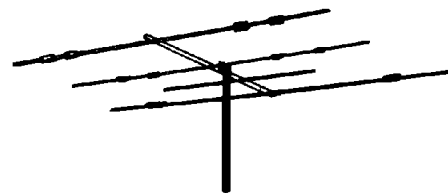
were happy to find that the author of the original article on X-beams in 1983 was still happy to answer them. In the midst of construction, I was surprised to find that L. B. Cebik (an avowed user of NEC antenna modeling programs and writer for QST and AntenneX) had written a white paper on the class of antennae called close end-coupled beams, of which X-beams are but one example. Other antennae in this class are the square, hex beam, and Moxon Rectangle (See: www.cebik.com/4.html and www.cebik.com/mu1a.html for a nice discussion).

With the antenna built, tuned, and installed, we found it produced a reasonable, yet not outstanding, front-to-back ratio and some improvement in observed signal strength over the reference vertical. Yet, this was a 20 meter beam mounted only about 30 feet off the ground.

After letting Rodney play with the antenna for a while at his QTH, I relocated the beam to my place and shortened all the arms to work on 15 meters. This version mounted at about 26 feet (a little over $\frac{1}{2}$ wavelength high) showed marked improvement, giving about 2 to 3 S-units over my reference R-7000. None of our work was entirely scientific, but it was fun and interesting at the very least. The X-beam is light enough to lift and carry up a ladder with one hand, albeit a little unwieldy in the 20 meter version with its 13 feet 10 inch arms! The hex beam discussed by Cebik is commercially available from Traffie Technologies and is getting pretty good reviews for a compact antenna.

With the same materials used for the X-Beam, I'm considering reformatting the antenna as a Moxon rectangle. Cebik's paper suggests that this antenna has some very interesting features. The Moxon is like a dual element yagi with the ends of the director and reflector bent at right angles toward each other to make a rectangle with the tips of the folded elements being closely coupled.

It's great to see how these things work. Fortunately, the modeling tools provide some clues as to what will work and what won't so that the trial and error of earlier days is reduced. Want to know more. Ask us. Homebrewing isn't dead yet!!!



And You Thought *YOU* Had It Bad

(This comment was printed on a QSL card which arrived recently from Jim Knowlton, 5U7JK, regarding licensing in Niger. —The Editor)

The Hausa proverb says: "A patient man can dig a well with a needle." That's how life is in Niger—it's hard and it takes a lot of patience. To get "5U7JK" took **41** visits to **15** different offices in **4** government ministries over a period of **5 months and 3 days!** But it's been worth it, since every day is a pileup in Niger. And sometimes you need that needle when you're on this side of the pileup. 73s!

The Back Page

Hey folks, it's **DUES TIME** again. Yep, we need some moolah from you so that we can continue to prepare and send this newsletter to you. Have you enjoyed receiving the Pileup this past year? Did you take part in our bar-beque, hamfest dinner, intraclub contests, use the PacketCluster or just enjoy the comradeship of associating with other DXers? If you're a PacketCluster user, please remit \$30 for 2002, otherwise only \$15. An envelope is enclosed inside for your convenience. If you lose the envelope, our Treasurer's address is listed below in the return address field as well as in the masthead section on Page 2 of this newsletter. And while you're at it, let us know if your telephone number, address, or email address has changed. This issue is being mailed as a hardcopy to all just so you get an SAE. Nice touch, huh?

Coming to the **Charlotte Hamfest**? Why not plan on joining us for dinner at Valentino's on Saturday night. Valentino's is at a new location, not far from where have our regular luncheons at Shoney's near Woodlawn and South Boulevard. Valentino's is just north of Woodlawn on the west side of Old Pineville Road. Old Pineville Road is one traffic light west of South Boulevard on Woodlawn or two traffic lights east of I-77 on Woodlawn. Entrees will range from \$10 to \$16, with tips and taxes to be added, of course. Light hors d'oeuvres will be provided by CDXA and a cash bar will be available. Cocktails begin at 6:30 PM and dinner will be at 7:00 PM.

Coming **contest** activity:

Dates	Event	Comments
Feb. 16-17	ARRL CW DX Contest	See December 2001 QST for details
Feb. 22-24	CQWW 160m SSB Contest	See November 2001 CQ for details
Feb. 23-24	North Carolina QSO Party	See February 2001 QST-organized by our Winston-Salem crew
Mar. 2-3	ARRL SSB DX Contest	See December 2001 QST for details

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First Class Mail

See something wrong with your address label? Notify W4NZC at once, please.