



The Pileup

Newsletter of the CDXA

Presidential Ponderings

Greetings all CDXA members.....

Hard to believe one-third of our year is history, but it has been a good year for the Carolina DX Association. Our membership is growing, we had the largest turnout in Club history for our Hamfest banquet, monies were raised during the Hamfest to allow us to financially assist up-and-coming DXpeditions, and we've got a website in which to be proud. I thank you, our members...for making all this possible.

The CDXA website < www.cdxa.org > is not only for our enjoyment, but also represents a great tool in assisting us in our hobby. For those of you who have not visited the site, some of the neat features include a boneyard (for buying and selling gear), current listings of all ham gear being auctioned-off, a complete source of QSLing information, a technical forum site, easy access to the W4 QSL bureau, current propagation reports, a callbook, and packet spots. These are but a few of the features of the CDXA website; we invite you to visit the site and participate. The guy who makes all this possible is our webmaster, WB4BXW—Wayne Setzer in Charlotte.

W4VHF	Ted Goldthorpe	President
N4PQX	Bob Burton	Vice-Pres.
K4SQR	Jim Miller	Sec.-Treas.
K4MD	Joe Simpkins	Cluster Mgr.
W3GQ	Paul Sturpe	Assoc. Cluster Mgr.
WB4BXW	Wayne Setzer	Webmaster
K8YC	John Scott	Editor

Many of you continue to receive the *Pileup* via the US Mail. This is not a problem, but if it's all the same to you...we would like to send your *Pileup* to you via the Internet. It's prompt, easy-to-read, you can print it, delete it quickly after reading or save on your PC for future reference. Also, by doing this you will be on the CDXA Email network, which allows you to send/receive Email to the membership and membership only. There is no threat to your Email address as it pertains to outsiders, company ads, etc. Please consider the above and let us know your wishes. Of course, we will need your Email address to include you in the CDXA Email network. Just get up with me--W4VHF, Jim Miller--K4SQR (Club Treasurer) or John Scott--K8YC (*Pileup* editor). We'll make the necessary adjustments.

It has been a pleasure QSOing with you here via the *Pileup*. Have a good Summer and we'll be chatting with you from time to time.

73 es gud DX - Ted Goldthorpe, W4VHF (President)

CDXA PacketCluster & Other Communication Systems		
W4DXA (11 mi. NNE of Mooresville)	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)	

One Good Idea!

By John Scott, K8YC

Many years ago, my wonderful Norwegian boss, Einar “call me Bill” Almdale offered me the wisdom of his many years. We were talking about the time spent on the floor of a trade show as exhibitors and how much it cost in terms of opportunity cost. He said, “You know, John, if you come away from a trade show with one good idea, it’s worth it.”

Just as I was leaving the Charlotte Hamfest this year, I noticed a few issues of the ARRL’s QEX at the ARRL booth next to the CDXA booth. I asked John Covington, W4CC, then manning the booth, if these particular issues were free for the taking, and the answer was “yes”. As I looked over the March/April 2003 issue later that day, I had found Einar’s “one good idea”.

In that issue was a discussion by Dan Maquire, AC6LA, of a wonderful adjunct to antenna modeling. It seems as if Dan had been in a beta version of the ARRL’s new antenna modeling course. The course uses two of the more popular PC-based modeling programs—NEC-Win Plus and EZNEC. One of the shortcomings noted by Dan about EZNEC was that small changes in a model required redefining and rerunning the model. At a minimum, the process was tedious and did not offer easy comparison between successive models. So, he decided to do something about it.

The result is a shareware product Dan now markets as MultiNEC for about \$40. MultiNEC contains the public domain NEC-2 antenna modeling engine used by both NEC-Win Plus and EZNEC, but it’s real strength is that

it uses Excel spreadsheet input forms to allow modeling antennas parametrically rather than via the laborious replication method referenced above. Dan calls it “modeling by equation”. Don’t get me or Dan wrong. Both of the present commercial products are successful because they provide an easy to use interface to the NEC computing engine which was probably mainframe based somewhere in its developmental past. They also both have some wonderful graphical features to show you drawings of the antenna you’ve modeled as well as 2-D and 3-D plots of the antenna patterns.

Yet, when used as an adjunct to EZNEC, for example, it allows you to do the following:

- Use variables to control features of the model.
- Build complete model files—not just “wire” sets—in EZNEC binary format.
- Use some of the user-friendly conventions of EZNEC such as split sources and “trap”-type loads.
- Show multiple radiation patterns as an animation instead of overlaying multicolored patterns on the same plot.
- Use *Excel* built-in functions to do regression analysis on calculated data.
- Automatically find the resonant frequency, or automatically change the geometry or other characteristics of a model, so that it is resonant at a desired frequency.

If you don’t own a NEC-based modeling tool, MultiNEC at least gives you modeling capability without some of the goodies that EZNEC and NEC-Win Plus offer. It is probably worth it for that alone. But, for serious modeling, it seems like MultiNEC offers an excellent extension of your modeling toolkit when combined with the capabilities of EZNEC or NEC-Win Plus. You’ll need *Excel* 97 or later to run MultiNEC after you download it from www.qsl.net/ac6la. I have the original article and a few copies. If this looks like your cup of tea and you’d like a copy of the article, let me know at k8yc@adelphia.net. —John Scott, K8YC

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:

Jim Miller, K4SQR
11600 Hilda Court
Charlotte, NC 28226



THOUGHTS ON HELPING OTHERS

Henry Elwell, N4UH

Do you ask for help when confronted with a problem? If so, do you ask the right question? Throughout life, I have been reluctant to ask for help. I have followed the, "I want to do it myself" philosophy. It works, and I probably learned a lot that way. However, being much older, I also have learned that I can save a lot of time by drawing on the experience of others, and maybe I'm getting lazy too.

When the Carolina DX Association recently overhauled the Web page, www.cdxa.org, a new feature was added; the ability to email members directly or via a Reflector action. At the same time, I developed an RFI problem with my Astron power supply going bonkers when using a 15-meter antenna with open wire feeders coming into the antenna tuner in the radio room. So I took the easy way out, also delaying action on my part, and asked the cdxa@mailman.qth.net, "How can I fix the PS to make it behave?"

I thought I would get one or two answers, but I got 13, with follow-ups on questions I asked individuals. I was amazed! There are a lot of savvy guys in CDXA, and they are willing to help. Use them! Here are those members, generous with their time and knowledge that came to my rescue for this particular problem. K0COP; K1MIJ; K4SQR; K4WLS; K4ZA; K8YC; KD4OM; KT4HN; N4PQX; N4ZX; W2DZO, W4PVT; and W4UW. From them I learned how to correct the RFI problem in the Astron power supply, which has a history of that difficulty. Two inquiries to Astron regarding any fixes they may have made went unanswered.

But among the helping suggestions were some that recommended I keep the RF out of the shack and told me how to do that. At that point, I realized I had not asked the right question. Nor had I given all the facts of the problem. The first and main problem was the loss of my TS850 when the power supply lost output. So I thought the simple solution was to fix the power supply. But I also had a raucous output from the computer speakers when modulating the transmitter. No problem, I just turned off the speakers. Yet, there was another little problem; one of the rack pilot lights would display an increase in brilliancy when I talked. So what, I didn't have to look at it. But what else may be happening that I was unaware of? So it made a great deal of sense to

cure the fundamental problem of getting the RF out of the shack. I had originally asked the wrong question and caused unnecessary responses from a lot of good guys.

The basic fix was to install a 4:1 balun in the 400 ohm ladder line, and follow that with a line isolator, both of which I purchased from The Radio Works in Virginia for about \$84. Now I no longer have a power supply problem, the noise is gone from the speakers, and the pilot light has a barely perceptible increase in brilliancy when I modulate the linear at its full power. I thank of all you for your help; I learned a lot about RFI.

So conclusions—ask for help on the CDXA Reflector, but first think carefully what your question will be, and make sure it's the right one!

(I, too, have recently been waging a war on RFI in the shack compounded by my second story shack location. I made use of some of the ideas that came across the reflector in response to N4UH's query. A fix for the Astron problem caused by a floating ground came from K4WLS, and oddly enough, a mod for the Astron to ground out RFI in internal circuitry appeared in the April QST Hints and Kinks section. —The Editor.)

Discovery Place Needs Your Experience

About every year or so, a call goes out for you to volunteer some of your time and years of experience to the radio room at Discovery Place. Mac Wood, W4PVT is one of our fellow CDXA members who finds and coordinates volunteers to staff the radio room at Discovery Place.

Mac's particular needs now are for operators for Saturdays and Sundays. The radio room is open from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday through Saturday each week and Sunday afternoons. Mac would like to hear from you whether you'd merely like to be on the substitute list, work one half of a day per month, or have a weekly gig.

What are the requirements? Nothing more than the enthusiasm you all have for Amateur Radio and the willingness to share that enthusiasm with visitors to Discovery Place. Past visitors to Discovery Place always seem to give the radio room high marks when asked. You might show how the International Morse Code is structured, demonstrate a PSK31 connection, have a DX contact, or let someone talk cross-town on the repeater. All fun stuff!

Hello World—A Book Review

By Don Daso, K4ZA

I'm leafing through the March *Vanity Fair*, when a QSL card image pops off the page at me. Hey, what's a QSL card doing in a magazine with Dominick Dunne, Hollywood hunks, scantily clad babes, and stories of conspicuous consumption, anyway? Turns out, it's a blurb for a newly published book, *Hello World—A Life in Ham Radio*. As one who likes to at least try fooling himself into being "up to date" on things in the world of books, along with the world of ham radio, I was, in a word, shocked. Surprised, even pleased, but still....

My wife thinks my life is all ham radio, but I knew (I was pretty confident, anyway) no one had written anything about me. A few minutes searching on Amazon provided only limited reviews or comments, so the only solution to the questions of what and who and why, was buying the book to see what it was all about. At Amazon's price, it's no more expensive than popcorn and a movie here in the big city. And it's about ham radio, so, three days later, I was holding the book in my hands.

Near the end of his life, Jerry Powell, W2OJW, provided his son with the name of a dealer in ham gear who could come and collect Jerry's stuff when he became a Silent Key. Along with the gear was a three-ring binder of QSLs.

Later, this binder would end up on a flea market table, where author Danny Gregory (a creative officer in a New York ad agency) would find himself so intrigued and puzzled by it, he ended up buying the binder. The 369 cards in that binder form the basis of this book.

Along with Paul Sahre, a graphic designer and educator, Gregory has created what's surely the most unique "look" at ham radio ever published. The Princeton Architectural Press publication is a graphic treat—the QSLs themselves provide rich and vibrant colors, along with some historical as well as cultural details. The paper is heavy, coated stock, and the reproductions are perfect (including rips, tears, watermarks, postmarks, in short, all faithfully showing their age). Jerry was a ham for 70 years. And his "life" in ham radio included the Great Depression, the Second World War, the burgeoning 50s, the heyday of the 60s, and on into the 70s, 80s, and the 90s.

Some readers will wonder why so few cards are repre-

sented. Some readers will be disappointed that Jerry was "a phone man." Some readers will decide there's more to life than sitting in the basement, listening to squeals, static crashes, and that interminable boredom unique to DXers. Some readers will pounce on the few factual faults, however slight (I've decided NOT to detail them, but I wish the hams who helped edit the work had caught them). But the simple fact is this book plunges readers into some typical ham experiences without their having to pass any exam—completely codeless, regulation and theory free. There's truly a culture and history to our hobby, and this book provides a look into it. Along with the colorful graphics are tiny tidbits of headlines and facts and reminders of what was happening in the world on the days that Jerry made these contacts. It's a chronological journey through globe-spanning conversations one man had throughout his lifetime.

Only a graphics-oriented person would look at a collection of old QSL cards, and come up with this observation: "In less than 24 square inches, these cards convey a lot of information. And we've found there's a story behind each QSL." Think about that the next time you're leafing through your own collection, reliving those contacts. Indeed, think about that the next time you're sitting down to fill out or answer some cards. Inspiration, indeed, from something we very often take for granted.

There are maps (one large foldout), a glossary, along with short essays on the history of radio, or radio technology, or other bits of ham trivia and culture, to round out the book. It is a graphical treat—there's enough detail and information to hold your interest as you leaf through the pages.

One can only hope that the general reading public will find this book. It's a unique introduction to our hobby—providing some insight into what many probably know little about or believe is perhaps quaint, maybe even obsolete, and certainly not something worth obsessing over. The technical aspects, tweaking the gear, are mentioned. The thrill of the chase, the perennial pursuit of DX, is mentioned. The rites and rituals of propagation, the community of shared friendships, are described.

Perhaps the ultimate accolade comes from describing W2OJW thus:

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Jerry Powell was not a super ham. He was just an average hobbyist with a long-term commitment, a typical radio amateur who got enormous satisfaction from his pastime. Like many hams, he was a great evangelist for amateur radio, mentoring new hams, sharing news and stories from his on-air adventures with colleagues, neighbors, and friends.

Hello World, A Life In Ham Radio is a tribute to his passion; an invitation to understand and share some of what makes this the best of all possible hobbies—a love of radio and the friendships that it can create and nurture around the world. It's a unique look at what we do, accessible and affordable and could serve as a swell introduction to the hobby. It's a unique look at one man's life, and a unique look at why the hobby continues to fascinate some. It explains some of the fun radio can provide to the average American, who in the end, is perhaps not so "average" after all.

Jerry's life in ham radio must have inspired the authors—they each became hams themselves. Not many of us can Elmer someone from so great a distance. I think W2OJW was a super ham, after all.

(Don's book review arrived within a day of reading a review of the same book in the May 2003 issue of QST, Page 47. Yet, I found Don's statement a more compelling reason to go out and buy a copy of the book. Since Don's article arrived here a neighbor who knows I'm a ham stopped by to drop off a nearly full page article about "Hello World" which appeared in the Sunday, May 4 issue of The New York Times. The thought comes to mind that this might be a good book for the radio room at Discovery Place. Hmmmm..... —The Editor)

IARU Admits Three New Member Societies

(This is ARRL Bulletin #29, Dated April 11, 2003)

The International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) has admitted three new member societies. The National Association Radioamateurs of Georgia (NARG), the Federation of Radiosport of the Republic of Armenia (FRRRA), were voted in April 10; the Vietnam Amateur Radio Club (VARC) officially joined IARU on April 4.

NARG has 156 licensed members out of a total of 485 amateurs in the country. The NARG president is Ma-

muka Kordzakhia, 4L2M. FRRRA counts 84 of Armenia's 128 radio amateurs as members. Its president is George Badalian, EK6GB. VARC was founded as a national organization in July 2002 under the Vietnam Radio-Electronics Association. The president of VARC is Eng. Nguyen Bac Ai, XV2A/3W6AR.

The IARU, founded in 1925, is a worldwide federation of national Amateur Radio societies with members in 156 countries and separate territories. In addition to joining the worldwide IARU, NARG and FRRRA become members of IARU Region 1 and VARC becomes a member of IARU Region 3. ARRL is a founding member of IARU.

Roving Reporter Meets Miller

The Roving Reporter hopped up to Lexington, North Carolina this month to talk to Kent Miller, K4MK, about his lifelong experiences in amateur radio leading to his recently earning DXCC Honor Roll status.

Roving Reporter: First, Kent, let me congratulate you on earning Honor Roll status. With our geographically disbursed membership, I hope we can learn a little more about you, since sometimes we only "meet" using the *TALK* function on the Cluster. Tell me how you got started in amateur radio.

K4MK: Well, my story is a lot like others I've read in the *Pileup*. When I was about 8 years old, several of my friends and I built crystal radio sets. There were three local broadcast stations which gave good strong signals, and I thought receiving signals through the air was something special. I guess my Dad thought so, too, since he enjoyed listening to foreign broadcasts on his Aircastle receiver sold by Sears, Roebuck and Co. One of my friends got a Hallicrafters receiver, and I soon was making a case to my Dad that I wanted one. So with some allowance and some extra chores, I earned my way to a Hallicrafters S-53A receiver.

RR: Well, I know the story doesn't end there. What next?

K4MK: Listening worked for a while, but I wanted to get on the air. I told my Dad of my intentions, and, thankfully he was supportive. With a little financial help—repaid of course—I bought a Globe Scout in 1954. But, I wasn't licensed! I'll tell you, that was an induce-

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ment. I had a rig, but no license, so I set out to study. I had a little playhouse my Dad had built for me when I was a tyke, and when my Mom got tired of listening to the code practice oscillator making dits and dahs, I was “invited” to seek another venue for my practice. It was perfect since it was a quiet place to study and wouldn’t bother anyone with the code. In early 1956, I passed the license exam and was one happy fellow.

RR: Ok, you’re on the air, but that’s a long way from DXCC Honor Roll. There must be more to the story?

K4MK: After getting licensed, I operated using CW, and I mostly operated on 75 meters. Then along came cars—and girls—and my priorities changed a bit. Don’t get me wrong, though. My first girlfriend was a ham who lived near Bristol, TN and we spent a lot of time “chatting” on the air using CW.

RR: So, Kent, tell us the secret of talking romantically using dits and dahs.

K4MK: If I did that, I’d have disable forever your sense of hearing. You don’t want that, do you?

RR: NO!

K4MK: Anyway, my Dad had to go over to Bristol on an occasion, and I went with him since my sweetheart lived only about 20 miles out of town back in the hills. She was from a ham family. Both her brother and father were hams, so there was no problem with me as a “stranger” meeting the whole family! That relationship did not turn out to be the love of my life, however.

RR: That’s a great story. So, with romance now behind us, what about “hamming”?

K4MK: To be honest, DXing originally was not a big thing with me. I did a lot of CW work for the first 10 years or so. I loved AM rigs and used them a lot up through the late 1960s. When two meter repeaters became big in the late 1960s, I spent a lot of time climbing towers and moving around rooftops of buildings putting up repeater systems. Repeaters are so pervasive today, many don’t know of all the work done to get them installed during the growth years. My church had missionaries in the Caribbean and South America in the 1970s and when members of the congregation found out I was a ham, I was drafted to be the communications guru. I bought a TH6DXX and got some of my first tastes of

20, 15 and 10 meters.

RR: Are you still fascinated with AM rigs?

K4MK: Yessir! I still like those big old rigs. I now have five fully operational rigs in my shack. I started collecting them as boat anchors, but recently I’ve found them to be good investments. As I’ve turned rigs over, almost all have brought a premium over what I paid for them. Of course, it’s hard to put a value on the TLC needed to get them and keep them running. I guess that’s what some collectors will pay for.

RR: You’ve had a varied interest in many aspects of ham radio. When did DXing come into play?

K4MK: Surprisingly, I didn’t really start chasing DX until about 1996. I bought a home with ample land in a rural setting, and I put up some antennas. In 1996 when I began the “quest”, I had only 103 entities confirmed. I had earned DXCC years before that—all on 75 meters AM Phone. So, I went about it a little backwards by getting over 100 entities on 75 meters first.

RR: That’s quite a run to get nearly 225 entities in the period from 1996 to 2002. You must have been keeping your eyes on the DX bulletins. Next year brings you to 50 years of amateur radio. What would you say is the strangest thing that’s happened in your years on the air?

K4MK: While I wouldn’t call it strange, I certainly call my “CW Romance” interesting and noteworthy—if only as a conversational item. What was strange, however, was a cruel prank played in the early 1970s. Someone sent a distress signal for about 1-1/2 days purporting to be a vessel in distress on the Great Lakes. A number of hams were involved as was the U.S. Coast Guard. When we learned it was a hoax after working diligently to lend a hand, all were quite upset.

RR: Wow. We can’t end up this interview on that sour note. Now that Olaf Madsen and Frank Dowd know you’re a collector of old radios, you’ll find you have some new friends in CDXA. And there are probably others, yet unknown. Congratulations, again on reaching the DXCC Honor Roll.

K4MK: Thanks for stopping by. Being here in Lexington, I don’t get a chance to come to the lunch meetings, but I’ve benefited from using the Cluster, and have certainly enjoyed my association, information learned and information shared with the other CDXA members.

ARRL June VHF QSO Party Offers Much

The June VHF QSO Party will be in the history book before the next PILEUP comes out in July. This year the event is an Affiliated Club Competition which means that you can submit your scores on behalf of CDXA. Bill Fisher, W4GRW, has agreed to compile the club scores for submission. Send your logs to him. Besides the club competition, the VHF QSO party is a good way to work toward the VUCC award. The event runs from 1800 UTC on June 14 to 0300 UTC on June 16. It looks like the AA4ZZ gang is going to the mountaintop again this year, so if nothing else, be sure to work them.

NC QSO Party Follow-up

You'll recall last month Ron Bailey's recount of his mobile effort in the NC QSO Party. The results show Ron earned a very respectable 2nd place in the contest. His nemesis, NY4N/M "blew in" through a snowstorm from Tennessee and took overall honors. Yet, these two "mobileers" had scores more than 50% greater than all competitors, including fixed-base operators.

Views from Sable Island, CY0MM

If a picture is worth a thousand words, we'll let the pictures below from the Sable Island DXpedition complete this month's PILEUP. The DXpedition ran November 15-29, 2002. Thanks to the Sable Island gang for the CD with pictures.

Sable Island is a crescent shaped island about 300km ESE from Halifax, Nova Scotia. It is called "The Graveyard of the Atlantic" for the 350 recorded shipwrecks littering the bottom since 1853. The small two-engined plane lands on the beach! You'll recall the team had a delayed departure because of weather—snow!



"Sable 1 cleared for landing on runway 18R. Good luck!"



Above: Home away from home for two weeks.

Below: Remnants of the "Graveyard"



Above: "Sable 2, this is Ground Control Approach. You've got 'er pretty well lined up for landing now."

The Back Page

The **Pileup** will not appear next month, since it is not published in the months of June and December. Your editor will use this time to figure out what to publish in the usually barren summer months. Any and all publishable material is welcome!

Upcoming **contest** activity between now and the next issue of the Pileup:

<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Contest</u>	<u>Comments</u>
May 17-18	US Counties QSO Party	Info at: www.stpaulisland.net/countycontest.html May 2003 QST, Page 95
May 24-25	CQ WW WPX - CW Contest	December 2002 CQ, Page 36 (http://home.woh.rr.com/wpx/)
May 30-June 1	Great Lakes QSO Party	May 2003 QST, Page 95 or www.mdxa1.org/1aglpq.html
June 7-8	IARU Region 1 Field Day	
June 14-16	ARRL June VHF QSO Party	May 2003 QST, Page 101
June 21-22	All Asian CW Contest	
June 28-29	ARRL Field Day	May 2003 QST, Page 101
July 12-13	IARU HF World Championships	April 2003 QST, Page 99

Geography Lesson: What African country abuts only ONE other country and has no shoreline on an ocean of the world? (Hint: That means it is wholly contained within the country surrounding it!) Answer: Lesotho, surrounded by Republic of South Africa. Don't forget to look for Joe Blackwell (AA4NN) operating from there as 7P8NN, July 7-11, 2003.

Jim Miller, K4SQR
11600 Hilda Court
Charlotte, NC 28226

k4sqr@juno.com

First Class Mail

See something wrong with your address label? Notify K4SQR at once, please.