



The Pileup

Newsletter of the CDXA



DX King News
By Dick Williams,
W30A



W4VHF	Ted Goldthorpe	President
AD4IE	Paul Ponak	Vice-Pres.
W3ZL	Cliff Wagoner	Sec.-Treas.
K4MD	Joe Simpkins	Cluster Mgr.
W30A	Dick Williams	Contest Mgr.
W3GQ	Paul Sturpe	Cluster Mgr.- North Area
WB4BXW	Wayne Setzer	Webmaster
K8YC	John Scott	Editor

Item 1: The reincarnated CDXA DX King competition started at 0000 UTC on January 1st. Don't worry if you haven't started yet because you have until 2359 UTC on December 31st to catch up. This is your chance to earn fame, capture outstanding plaques, win handsome certificates, and possibly take home a 26 inch LCD TV. See page three of the October Pileup, <http://cdxa.org/pileup/Archives/cdxa0810.pdf>, for all the details.

Item 2: CQ Magazine has made one change to its DX Marathon rules for 2009. Since scoring in our DX Competition is the same as for the DX Marathon, that change applies to DX King too. The change eliminates the prohibition on assistance in the Unlimited Class. The complete rules are available at [http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/DX Marathon Rules Dec08.pdf](http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/DX_Marathon_Rules_Dec08.pdf) and on page 26 of the December CQ.

Item 3: CDXA member WB4ROA, Hank, has figured out a way to filter

packet cluster spots to show only spots for countries you need for DX Marathon. He uses "CC User", a freeware cluster user program you can download from <http://www.ve7cc.net/>. Hank says "After you start CC USER (and connect to the VE7CC node) go to the Country Tab and you can select entities (spots) to PASS or REJECT. Here I PASS only countries I still need. Once I work a new one, I just uncheck that country from the list of needed countries and I no longer see those spots." You could start the other way using the REJECT option and check each country as you work them. Hank also mentioned that you can run more than one instance of CC User simultaneously. This will be of interest to those already using CC User for their daily DXing.

Item 4: Don't forget to start sending me (w30a@roadrunner.com) your DX marathon scores after your score reaches 100. We'll publish them in the *Pileup* as they come in.

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CDXA PacketCluster & Other Communication Systems		
W4DXA (11 mi. NE of Mooresville)	144.93 MHz (1200 bits/second)	441.00 MHz (9600 bits/second)
K4MD Charlotte, NC	144.91 MHz (1200 bits/second)	Not Available on 9600 bits/second
NA4L (Near Hillsville, VA)	144.95 MHz (1200 bits/second) Connect to NA4L ("C NA4L")	
K4MD (AR Cluster via Telnet)	k4md.no-ip.com	
CDXA Repeater 147.18 MHz (+600)	W4DXA, Near Fort Mill, SC	
World Wide Web Homepage	www.cdxa.org	
Wednesday Luncheon (11:30 AM)	Murphy's Food and Spirits, 131 E. Woodlawn Road, Charlotte, NC	

(Continued from page 1)

DX King (con'd)

Item 5: Roger, N4ZC, was the first to report getting to a score of 100. He did this at 1454Z on January 2 with 73 countries and 27 zones. He did this without working a W or zones 3 or 4!

Welcome New Members!

Since the last issue of *The Pileup* we've had four new members join us. Joining CDXA for the first time are **James Plummer (K8ARY)** and **Harry "Pat" Parrish (K4YR)**. James lives in Gastonia, NC. We'll get to know more about James' interests in time as he turns up at a few CDXA events. Pat writes me from Newland, NC and says, ". . . QRV over 60 years, ex calls K4HXF & W5PSB. DXCC 386/338, Don't contest much in recent years due to my age (shortly 82) but still put in a few hours. Was W5 QSL Buro manager 1960-66, and W4 Buro manager with help from Les K4DY 1966-71--when I retired from bureau a bunch of guys got together and gave me life membership in ARRL. Never "big" on joining, this being my first time joining a DX Club. Still sorting a letter for our bureau. 73, Pat" Indeed, Pat is even now the "Y" letter manager for the W4 QSL Bureau so we'll discount his comment about "joining".

The other two new members have been in the ranks of CDXA before. You'll recognize **Phil Martin (K4ATM)** of Mooresville, NC and **"Hutch" Hutchinson (NK0S)** of Wilmington, NC. "Hutch" writes, ". . . After a one year lapse in my membership it is good to be back...always getting good info from club

The Pileup

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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 December. Dues are payable by check to the Secretary/Treasurer:

Cliff Wagoner, W3ZL
P. O. Box 577
Davidson, NC 28036

Address, telephone, and email address changes should be directed to the Secretary/Treasurer at the above address or via email at: jcw53@cornell.edu.

members via the DX QSL group...One of these days I will make it to a Wednesday lunch--I have a cousin that lives in that area but it seems my schedule just never lets me get out of this area!!! News??.. Well I recently received the basic 5 Band WAZ award...it's posted on the CQ website but I am still waiting for the certificate. I just submitted my cards to the ARRL for #300 Mixed. --73 & Good DXing! Hutch, NK0S (ys9hh, hl9hp, hp1xhh)"

So there you have it. Four new members. Welcome to all of you, and we hope to see you at the Charlotte Hamfest in March!

2009 Contest Calendar

By Dick Williams, W3OA

Here are some dates of important activities for CDXA members in 2009. I suggest you put these on your personal calendar now to minimize the chance of scheduling conflicts arising as we go through the year. If you, like me, don't keep your own calendar, please give the dates to your "calendar keeper".

- CQ World Wide 160 Meter, CW Jan 23-25
- ARRL DX Contest, CW Feb 20-22
- CQ World Wide 160 Meter, Phone Feb 22- Mar 1
- North Carolina QSO Party Mar 1
- ARRL DX Contest, Phone Mar 6-8
- Charlotte Hamfest Mar 14-15
- CDXA Annual Hamfest Banquet Mar 14
- Dayton Hamvention May 15-17
- ARRL June VHF QSO Party June 13-14
- Field Day June 27-28
- CQ World Wide, VHF July 18-19
- Shelby Hamfest Sept 5-6
- ARRL September VHF QSO Party Sept 12-13
- CQ World Wide, RTTY Sept 25-27
- SEDCO/Ten-Tec Hamfest Sept 26
- CQ World Wide, Phone Oct 23-25
- CQ World Wide, CW Nov 27-29
- ARRL 160 Meter Contest Dec 4-6
- ARRL 10 Meter Contest Dec 12-13

Last Call for 2009 Dues

In the very near future Secretary-Treasurer Cliff Wagoner will be purging names from the membership list whose dues remain unpaid for 2009. It is now easier than ever to pay your dues using a credit card and PayPal—no stamps and no envelopes! Just go to the CDXA website and look for the "Join/Renew" tab along the left side of the Homepage. It couldn't be easier.

Win Outback Gift Cards and Trophies in ARRL DX Contest

By Dick Williams, W3OA

The ARRL International DX Contest is just around the corner. The CW contest starts February 20, the phone contest starts March 6. We are again offering great prizes to encourage you to participate and contribute to CDXA's Club Score.

Our scores for the last several years are shown below. The last column shows where we ranked among all club entries in the medium category, 50 or fewer entries.

Year	CDXA Score	Number of CDXA Entries	Rank in Medium Club Category
2000	3,547,737	10	24
2001	2,588,943	9	21
2002	3,407,106	13	20
2003	2,014,479	14	19
2004	6,569,034	31	16
2005	7,619,703	32	14
2006	2,747,289	21	18
2007	7,910,718	30	9
2008	11,293,344	43	3

You can see 2008 was a great year for us. We will need another great effort to maintain that level of success. And if we increase our scores by 25 percent we can move up to second place! To this end, we are offering the following prizes:

- o 1st place prizes—Each winner can choose a trophy or a \$50 Outback Steak House Gift Card.
 - o Top Combined, CW plus Phone score
 - o Top CW score
 - o Top CW score, low power
 - o Top DXpedition score
 - o Top Phone Score
 - o Top Multi-op score
 - o Top Phone Score, low power
- o 1000 or more QSOs total in the CW and Phone contests—Each participant can choose a trophy or a \$25 Outback Steak House gift card
- o 500 or more QSOs total in the CW and Phone contests—Each participant gets a photo printed CDXA certificate and patch
- o 250 or more QSOs—Each participant gets a CDXA patch.

An individual can only win one prize. Only members whose scores are eligible for the club competition (meet the 175 mile radius criteria) as defined in the contest rules can win a Gift Card or a trophy. These rules are available at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2009/intldx.html>. All CDXA members are eligible for the CDXA certificate and patch.

The Race to “DX King” is On!

The competitive juices are flowing over at N4ZC's shack. With the kickoff of the DX King competition approaching on January 1, Roger Burt mused at the CDXA luncheon in late December that he wanted to meet his requirements for the drawing for the flat panel TV BEFORE he left for a short sojourn to Florida in the second week of January. We've heard that before he

left he had a count of entities and zones worked in 2009 in excess of 165. If so, Roger's name is already in the hat for the drawing to be held after the CQ Marathon results are published next year. If all this talk of “DX King” is new to you, then look elsewhere in this and the last two issue of the Pileup for articles about DX King. All past issues of *The Pileup* can be viewed in the archives on the CDXA website.

Annual Meeting/Election of Officers

All of last year's officers returned to guide the club through the 2009 calendar year and were elected to serve at the Annual Meeting/Christmas Party. Also on the agenda for the Annual Meeting was a vote to amend the association's By-Laws to permit proxy voting for the election of officers. While proxy voting had been authorized the past two years by a special vote of the Board of Directors, it is now an official part of our operating procedures.

A club like ours always can use some new ideas on how to best serve the membership. Accordingly, each of you is encouraged to make your desires known to the leadership. Also, if anyone has any desires to become an officer of the club, please make your availability known so you can be put on the election slate for next year. Getting involved with the running of any organization is a sure way to get a deeper sense of "belonging".

Everything's Fine in "Oh-Nine"

There's no need to moan about the delayed start of Cycle 24. There are some interesting DXpeditions coming in the next few months. If you don't know what to do until then, you can start increasing your entity/zone count for 2009 for the CQ DX Marathon and CDXA's own "DX KING" add-on competition that our Contest Manager, Dick Williams has been telling you about for the past few months—it's here NOW!

Still not satisfied? Have you checked out the ARRL's recently announced **Triple Play Award**? It's a WAS award for all modes using only Logbook of the World (LoTW) to get your confirmations. A recent announcement by ARRL cited that some folks already have the WAS earned on digital modes via LoTW following the recent RTTY test! Read more below. What are you waiting for?

Here's the "skinny" from ARRL:

Jan 1, 2009: ARRL's New Triple Play Worked All States Award --

1. The Triple Play WAS (Worked All States) Award is available to all amateurs worldwide who must use Logbook of the World (LoTW) to confirm QSOs with each of the 50 states on voice, CW, and digital modes. The Triple Play WAS Award is a serial-numbered award starting with # 1, as determined by the time stamp of the electronic application submitted via LoTW. Awards issued will be tracked and presented on the ARRL Website.

2. Two-way communications must be established on amateur bands with each state on each mode. There is no minimum signal report required. Any or all bands (except 60 Meters) may be used for the Triple Play WAS. The District of Columbia may be counted for Maryland.

3. Contacts must be made from the same location, or from locations no two of which are more than 50 miles apart. Club station applicants, please include clearly the club name and callsign of the club station (or trustee).

4. Contacts must be made after 0000Z on January 1, 2009 to be considered for this award. LoTW will be programmed to automatically use this criterion. Contacts must be confirmed via LoTW. Written confirmations will not be accepted.

5. There are no endorsements for the Triple Play WAS Award.

6. Contacts made through "repeater" devices or any other power relay method cannot be used for WAS confirmation. A separate WAS is available for Satellite contacts. All stations contacted must be "land stations." Contact with ships, anchored or otherwise, and aircraft, cannot be counted. EXCEPT: Permanently docked exhibition ships, such as the Queen Mary and other historic ships will be considered land based.

7. A US applicant must be an ARRL member to participate in the WAS program. DX stations are exempt from this requirement.

8. Attempts to falsify data, logs, or other application operations may be grounds for disqualification. The decision of the ARRL Awards Committee in such cases is final.

9. Please follow the instructions presented on the LoTW website. The cost of the Triple Play WAS award is \$12 for a certificate delivered to a U.S. address, or \$13 delivered to an address outside U.S.A. Per-QSO fees associated with using LoTW credits as normal will be charged via the online application.

Read more about the award in QST and see the certificate.

If you have previously set-up a WAS award account on your user page, you do not need to do anything else. There is a new Triple Play Award counter and link in your WAS award area if you have confirmed any state in LoTW after January 1.

2008 CWAC Wrap UP

Dick Williams, W3OA

The total of our claimed 2008 CQWW scores was 23.8 million points. This is down significantly from the 2007 total of 30.6 million points. We did a pretty good job in the CW Contest, scoring a total of 10.5 million points as compared to 11.4 million points in 2007. That wasn't enough to make up for our slow start in the SSB contest where we only scored 13.2 million points compare to our 2007 SSB score of 19.2 million points. I think our basic problem was a fall off in participation. We dropped from 35 entrants in 2007 to 28 in 2008 while the average points per entrant remained almost constant at 860 thousand points each. Let's try to do better in 2009!

CDXA again fielded entries in both the CW and phone five-man team competitions.

Our phone team - AA4S, KI4TZ, KZ2I, N4PQX, and N4ZC scored 6,288,000 points.

Our CW team - AA4S, IN3QBR, N2TU, N4ZC, and WA4DOU scored 5,786,000 points.

CDXA members competed for first place "Contest Within A Contest" (CWAC) awards in seven categories. Each winner got his choice of a trophy or a fifty-dollar gift card for Outback Steak House. The winners were:

Top Combined Score - N4ZC, 3 million, 813 thousand points

Top Phone Score - N4PQX, 1 million, 304 thousand points

Top Phone Score, Low Power - WA3GNW, 25 thousand points

Top CW Score - N2TU, 1 million, 187 thousand points

Top CW Score, Low Power - WA4DOU, 978 thousand points

Top Multi-Op Score - W3GQ and his team W3ZL, K8YC, and KA8FAN, 4 million, 344 thousand points

Top DXpedition Score - AA4V, 8 million, 661 thousand points

Members who completed 1000 or more QSOs combined in the phone and CW contests each received a trophy or a twenty-five-dollar gift card for Outback Steak House. These winners were:

AA4S

IN3QBR (not eligible for a gift card or trophy, did receive a certificate)

IN3ZNR (not eligible for a gift card or trophy, did receive a certificate)

K2SX

KI4TZ

W3ZL

W3OA

Members who completed 500 or more QSOs combined in the phone and CW contests each received a certificate and a CDXA patch. There were three winners:

AD4IE K8YC KZ2I

Members who completed 250 or more QSOs combined in the phone and CW contests each received a CDXA patch. There were five winners here:

K3IRV K4GHS N1GC W4ZV WB4ROA

Here are soapbox comments I received from CDXA members after the CW contest:

AA4V - I was only able to get in one hour of operating in the CW portion....my company didn't leave until noon on Sunday!

AD4IE - Had some amp issues and had to cut it off for a while. I decided that competing with 100 watts was no fun any more.

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IN3QBR – I'm very sad to say I did not do well this year. The weather conditions were terrible, all the time strong wind and heavy rains. I spent a lot of hours, also during the night, repairing the 40 meter loop that broke four times. The 160 meter vertical was down, too. I must say that all this is part of the game, but is this supposed to be fun ???!

KI4TZ - I wasn't much help with CW test. I had family in and was only able to sneak in a few hours of operating time.

N2TU - The Mannheim Steamroller concert was "fair"....lost almost 3 hours with that...And almost 4 hours with the antenna...I "think" I found the problem...in the Alpha Delta Coax switch is a gas tube protector...I think it was arcing over at 800 watts on 40 through 160...it was fine for 20 through 10...I changed just about everything—coax, connectors, jumpered the remote antenna switcher, etc. (This explains why he was at my QTH borrowing coax at 2 AM the contest Saturday morning– W3OA)

N4PQX - Just a few hours of S&P, conditions seemed down but must be the difference running 100w, thought I'd never get a few of the mults. Not much Europe here either day. Heard AA4S, N4ZC, N4TU, W3GQ, WA4DOU and AD4IE in my brief appearances so hopefully some good scores.

W3OA - I ran a Skimmer for 48 hours during CQWW and I think it was a great success. My score and number of Q's went up 15 percent over last year for the same number of hours worked. The SDR was a Softrock and the antenna connection was from the Mark-V Rx Antenna Out jack. I had Skimmer set for 96 kHz sampling rate, Do not spot call signs without "CQ", and Paranoid validation. The Master.DTA file was one I had modified to remove all the US calls. Thus, the only spots sent out were for "counters" that were participants in previous contests. I used Wintelnetx to combine Skimmer spots with spots from the K4MD Cluster node. These were fed into a simple chat server program to allow other CDXA users to see the combined spot stream via a telnet connection. My local display was the N1MM bandmap.

W4WNT - Operated from Oak Island for the CW contest.

W4ZV (only 160 meters, comments edited) - Very frustrating weekend here. I could never run except once briefly the last night around 06-07z, after most of Eastern EU was in daylight. Signal strengths were simply never what they should have been and I had great difficulty in many pileups. Stations farther north were in and out with impunity. I called SV9CVY forever and never did get him...while he answered K5RX three times before Jim realized it. I believe North was the place to be this weekend...the farther the better. The top three multi-multis (KC1XX, K3LR and W3LPL) were amazingly within a few QSOs of each other (385/381/397) and I'm normally much closer to them. I noticed the same effect from Europe. Normally countries bordering the Mediterranean are the strongest from EU. This time I missed CT, EA6, IT9, 9H and only worked 5B4AI and LZ9W from zone 20...no SV, YO (YR9P was another experience like SV9CVY above), 4X, etc. I must have spent an hour total calling 4L0A on all 3 evenings only to hear him answer VE3EJ's CQ Saturday night.

WA3GNW - Had to go to Atlanta for Thanksgiving so I didn't get as much operating in as I wanted.

WA4DOU - This is my traditional "low power" entry category. I don't really care about phone operation and last month, when I realized my phone score wasn't going to be very good, I bumped my power up to high power to try and make the score better. That was my one and only contest entry, ever, with high power.

WA4DOU (again) - Offering prizes like the Outback gift card was a stroke of genius. Now our wives have an incentive to tell us to "get in there and win us a gift card." My wife never gives me any lip on the affected weekends anymore. Pure genius.

WB4ROA (comments edited) - My operating time was significantly reduced by visiting relatives! I was able to use CW Skimmer a bit during CQWW CW. Used DX-TELNET program as a spot filter to N1MM. DX-TELNET, as well as CW Skimmer were on another networked computer to reduce the load on the run computer. DX-TELNET allows me to connect to several TELNET addresses at the same time, and also to the TELNET connection in CW Skimmer. The TELNET link between my run machine and the spot machine does not duplicate spots and filters determine the lifetime of the spot. My main focus was on operating, but I did observe CW Skimmer decoding many signals simultaneously and spots appeared in N1MM often minutes ahead of TELNET spots. Worked flawlessly for the entire contest. I guess it was like the "Energizer" Bunny – just kept going and going.

DX King Logging Tip

By John Scott, K8YC

Do you need an easy way to track your CQ Marathon/DX King progress? If you are using one of the many good logging programs today, there is probably an easy way to quickly have your progress counted. I am a user of DX4WIN, so my comments will relate to that software. If your logging software has reports for DXCC and WAZ progress and it will import ADIF files, you are likely in business.

DX4WIN has a search function to find QSLs in your historical log based on almost any attribute you'd like—callsign, country, prefix, date, mode, band, zone, or combinations thereof. One of the “preferences” in DX4WIN is that if you search on date, the software will create a subset of your log with all QSLs AFTER that date gathered together. (There is even a function which will let you count the number of records found in your search.) If you search using the date as January 1, 2009, DX4WIN will find all of the records you've added to your main log since that date. Once the search is complete, export that subset of your log as an ADIF (Amateur Data Interchange Format) file, remembering the directory where you've saved it.

Then close the main log in your logging program and open a new, empty logging file. You can call it DXKING09 so as to not confuse it with your master log. Import the ADIF file you created using your search into DXKING09. Now you have a log file with only QSOs completed in 2009. A quick check of the DXCC report will show you how many unique entities you've worked in 2009, and a quick check of the WAZ report will show you how many zones you've worked in 2009. Add the two results together, and voila', you're done. There's no need to even save this special log file. You can delete it. When you want to know your progress the next time, merely repeat the process. If you want a check off list to track what you've worked, then merely print the DXCC and WAZ reports and check off new entities/zones as you work them but continue to log all calls as usual using your master log. As the year progresses, you'll know where you stand, and at year end you can use one of the several software tools now written to prepare your CQ Marathon submission.

Advanced notice regarding Charlotte Hamfest Dinner site.

2009 Carolina DX Association Annual Banquet

March 14th - 6:30 PM until

**Texas Land & Cattle
Steak House**
www.txlc.com

**Exit 49 off I-85
Concord Mills**

*...only 10 minutes from the I-85 & I-77
intersection*

**Choose from 3 different entrees, plus
all the trimmings including dessert,
coffee, tea or soda; tax and tip.**

\$22.95

CASH BAR

**LOTS of PRIZES to be GIVEN
AWAY!**

**FOR
RESERVATIONS**

contact

Paul Ponak

pponak@carolina.rr.com

Out of the Days of Yesteryear. . .

Take a gander at the photo below. Accompanying it was the following note from Paul Deyo, N1PD:

I believe this is the very first meeting of the CDXA in Roger Burt's (N4ZC) carport. I don't have the year. I took the picture. Kind of wish I was in it. Use as you wish. Thanks.

I'll have to rely on others to identify those present. According to the Club History, this meeting took place in 1981. I do see Gary Dixon on the left with his callsign emblazoned on his shirt, and there is no mistaking the bearded chin of the recently retired "Chief" of the USCG, Roger Burt sitting prominently in the middle rear exercising his powers as the first elected President of CDXA. Paul Deyo was elected Treasurer of the first group of officers. Also included in that founders group were the following current or late members of CDXA: Jim Miller, Ric Porter, Ron Bailey, Larry Knain, Gary Dixon, Bill Parris, Scott Douglass, Ted Goldthorpe, Henry Elwell (SK), and Larry Sossoman (SK).

A "FLAT" QSL Card for KU4BP

Ed Swiderski, KU4BP, recently sent me the QSL card pictured below. It is amazing to what lengths some hams will go to ensure we get a pristine, clean, perfectly flat QSL card. (Read the card carefully to see what I mean!)



Winter in “Sunny Italy”

Many North Americans tend to think of Italy in terms of the warmer climate found in Rome or Naples—you know, warm Mediterranean Sea breezes and plenty of sunshine. Just so you know, Northern Italy is home of the Dolomite Mountains of the Alps. Cities like Cortina, where the Winter Olympics have been held in the past, and Trento, where Fabrizio Vedovelli (IN3ZNR) and Mauro Tomazzoni (IN3QBR)—both members of CDXA—make their homes are found in the Dolomites. Fabrizio recently sent me some photos of his mountain chalet in December. Be sure to bring your suntan lotion when visiting, because you can get sunburned at high elevations, even if only on your face. Unless, of course, you are a member of your local “polar bear” club and have more skin exposed!



CDXA VHF/UHF Awards Roundup

CDXA presence was noted in the VHF/UHF Century Club (VUCC) Awards recap in the December 2008 issue of QST.

In the 6m meter category **Itice Goldthorpe, K4LVV**, was recognized for attaining 525 gridsquares. **Marc Tarplee, N4UFP**, showed he’s been busy chasing gridsquares when he reported his 400th gridsquare. **Ron Bailey, AA4S**, reported 150 gridsquares of his own after working 6 meters for a number of years in contests at different stations.

Activity from CDXA members was not limited to 6 meters, however. **Pete Manfre, WA2ODO**, earned Certificate #686 for attaining his first 100 gridsquares on 2 meters. Right behind Pete was **Joe Barkley**,

KI4TZ, with Certificate #687. **Thomas Wright, N4HN**, increased his gridsquare count at the same time to 150 grids on 2 meters.

CDXA was not done yet in this recap. **Paul Trotter, AA4ZZ**, who has been a confirmed VHFer for many years increased his grid count on both 222 MHz and 432 MHz to 90. It appears Paul has been tracking the grids he’s worked while operating the 222 MHz and 432 MHz stations during the contest weekends in Boone the past few years.

Congratulations to all of the above members for a fine showing in VUCC activity.

An Editorial: Regulation Run Amok?

By John Scott, K8YC

1963. That’s the year I graduated from The University of Michigan and took a job as a young engineer with Bell Telephone Labs. One of the required courses in the orientation classes at BTL was called Bell System I. It was there we all learned the history of “Ma Bell”, regulation of Bell’s quasi-monopoly status, historical rates of return, and the role of the FCC and the various state public utility commissions. I recall the respect we all held for the FCC in setting rates of return that ensured the public got a “fair shake” in the cost of Bell’s long distance services and that the Bell System, in turn, was ensured that it was adequately awarded a reasonable return on its capital for investing in technology that was then not considered quite as “essential” as water, gas, and electricity.

As a new ham in the late 1970s, I soon realized that the FCC had done a wonderful thing to allot a number of bands which permitted us to almost always to be able to find HF propagation regardless of time of day, month of year, or year in the 11 year solar cycle.

Some forty years after my first real exposure to the FCC, our country was in the full swing of the pendulum toward deregulation. The Bell System had been broken up in 1984 into eight or nine pieces, but it had managed to reassemble itself back into about 3 big players by 2003. (It’s really two players today—Verizon Communications and AT&T Inc!) The startup long-distance carriers like MCI and Sprint have been absorbed, gone out of business, or morphed into other communication segments. So, deregulation which was supposed to foster competition has allowed the executives in those industries to assemble themselves back to an oligopoly

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anyway. One has to wonder, especially in the recent failures to “regulate” the financial sector whether the public good can suffer the greed being shown of late by CEOs and/or their boards of directors in a totally unregulated economy—but that’s a whole other topic to be visited.

But, can we trust the “regulators” when they do exist? As hams, we’ve watched the debacle of Broadband over Power Line (BPL) fostered by the FCC over the past five years. It caused me to shudder somewhat when I think about how I used to feel about the FCC as a fair, even-handed organization. The very organization we rely on to empower us and give us our radio spectrum had turned toward favoring financial interests and turned its back on technological facts and years of historical precedent and rules governing the very services it is still empowered to regulate. Our national organization, The American Radio League, has had to spend thousands of dollars to litigate against the organization which both authorizes our service and is also supposed to protect us from harmful interference.

We, through the ARRL, had some small success in our litigation. The courts held that the FCC had in fact quietly altered some of its own procedures and had lost the transparency expected of a public regulatory body. More important than the recent court judgment in ARRL’s favor, in my opinion, was the severe chastisement of the FCC by a recently released Congressional study. That study indicates that the dysfunction in the FCC was not in the many civil servants doing their job but in the top echelons of the Commission which chose for reasons—not fully clear—to change the well established ways the Commission has historically conducted itself.

The findings were reported in a recent “ARRL Letter”. It is such an important piece for you to read, despite its length, that I include the full text of the ARRL publication in case you missed it. I suggest you take the time to read it thoroughly. In these days of “big government”, it shows that the citizenry can still make a difference through its elected representatives. It is particularly telling that in the paragraph defining the Congressional Committee methodology, the FCC has still not provided some of the materials requested by the committee. Some things may never change.

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The ARRL Letter
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==> CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS
RELEASE REPORT LAMBASTING FCC CHAIR-
MAN KEVIN MARTIN

On Tuesday, December 9, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce –the congressional committee that oversees the Federal Communications Commission -- released its majority staff report "on the bipartisan investigation of the FCC's regulatory processes and management practices." The report—"Deception and Distrust: The Federal Communications Commission under Chairman Kevin J. Martin"—stated that the investigation was prompted "by allegations to the effect that [FCC] Chairman Kevin J. Martin has abused FCC procedures by manipulating or suppressing reports, data and information"

http://www.arrl.org/news/files/FCC_Report120908.pdf
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"Our investigation confirmed a number of troubling allegations raised by individuals in and outside the FCC," said Representative Bart Stupak (D-MI), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. "The Committee staff report details some of the most egregious abuses of power, suppression of information and manipulation of data under Chairman Martin's leadership. It is my hope that this report will serve as a roadmap for a fair, open and efficient FCC under new leadership in the next administration."

Representative John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce echoed Stupak's concerns: " Any of these findings, individually, are cause for concern. Together, the findings suggest that, in recent years, the FCC has operated in a dysfunctional manner and Commission business has suffered as a result. It is my hope that the new FCC Chairman will find this report instructive and that it will prove useful in helping the Commission avoid making the same mistakes."

The report said that "in an investigation of this nature," the Committee would usually hold hearings "to receive testimony from witnesses and to further examine the issues." But due to what the Committee called "the climate of fear that currently pervades the FCC," the report said the Committee found that key witnesses "were un-

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willing to testify or even have their names become known." For that reason, they issued a report in place of a hearing "to protect the many honest people who came forward under a promise of protection or anonymity." Chairman Martin was invited to meet with the Committee to discuss matters addressed by the investigation, but the report said he "ignored [the Committee's] invitation," as did his Chief of Staff Daniel Gonzalez and Chief of Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau Derek Poarch. In its 110-page report, the Committee described 12 allegations, ranging from retaliation against FCC employees who differed with the Chairman's policies to enhanced 911 wireless services to broadband over power lines (BPL). To go along with the 12 allegations, 22 exhibits were attached to the report, such as internal e-mails, e-mails from FCC commissioners to their staff, statements made by FCC commissioners and letters to and from commissioners (including Chairman Martin). Not all 12 allegations were substantiated by the Committee.

o Broadband over Power Lines

Concerning BPL, the report alleges that FCC officials "ignored complaints of radio frequency interference caused by BPL high-speed Internet technology, delayed an enforcement investigation for two years and improperly withheld engineering data regarding BPL from the public."

The report found that in October 2004, as then-Chairman Michael Powell issued his final rule "defining BPL access and setting technical and administrative requirements to protect licensed radio operators from harmful interference," the FCC "withheld from the public certain engineering reports on which it relied in promulgating the rule" from the final rule and order. Even though the BPL rules were adopted during Powell's tenure, the report found that "it was under Chairman Martin that the Enforcement Bureau and the General Counsel continued to withhold the redacted engineering reports and insisted on doing so in the course of the ensuing litigation [with the ARRL]"

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2008/04/25/10064/>.

The report goes on to say that on April 25, 2008, the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit found that the FCC, in the case filed by the ARRL, "violated the Administrative Procedure Act when it played 'hide and seek' with engineering data used in its support of the order and 'cherry-picked' a study on which it had relied"

<http://pacer.cadc.uscourts.gov/common/opinions/2008>

[04/06-1343-1112979.pdf](#)>.

"The fact that the FCC withheld the required engineering reports in this matter," the report concluded, "indicates poor judgment and an attempt to hide critical weaknesses in its decision. Ironically, the FCC's attempts to hide this information only served to provoke suspicion and its handmaiden, litigation. This case [filed by the ARRL] illustrates the extent to which a culture of secrecy has developed at the FCC that is as counterproductive as it is unnecessary." The report states that this "particular situation" has been corrected by the courts and technological issues arising from BPL have been "rendered largely moot over time due to improvements" in BPL technology.

"It is distressing, but unfortunately not surprising," said ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, "to read that the FCC's mishandling of the BPL issue was simply a part of a broad pattern of dysfunction at the Commission. This is a relatively recent development and is unprecedented in the ARRL's long experience with the FCC—an association that dates back to the very creation of the agency, 20 years after the founding of the ARRL. While the marketplace failure of BPL and the steps taken voluntarily by the few companies that have deployed BPL systems have combined to minimize interference, the regulatory issue is by no means moot. The rules remain inadequate."

Sumner continued: "More than seven months after the Court remand, the FCC has done nothing to correct its errors, nor has it complied with the very specific instructions from the United States Court of Appeals. These instructions included the disclosure of the studies that it intentionally withheld from the public, but upon which it relied in adopting its rules. Indeed, the only step the Commission has taken since the Court's remand order is to mount an unsuccessful effort to oppose our claim for reimbursement of the printing costs for the briefs in the case—a small fraction of the expenses incurred by the ARRL in our appeal—expenses that would not have been necessary had the Commission followed the law in the first place"

<http://www.arrl.org/?artic=8338>.

o Other Findings by the Committee

The report also showed instances of where Chairman Martin "manipulated, withheld or suppressed data, reports and information," and said Martin's "manipulation [of another report] may have damaged the credibility of

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the Commission, and certainly undermined the integrity of the staff. Moreover, it was done with the purpose of affecting the congressional decision-making, in that it was issued as a report to Congress ." Saying that FCC matters have not been handled in an "open or transparent manner," the report said the FCC "rais[ed] suspicions both inside and outside the Commission that some parties and issues are not being treated fairly." The report stated that the Committee's impressions were "confirmed" when it discovered that Chairman Martin made a "preemptory reversal" of [a report's] conclusions and that Martin did not seek "further public comment or conduct further studies" thus giving the impression "that the issue was not handled fairly or openly."

The report also found that Chairman Martin's "heavy-handed, opaque and non-collegial management style has created distrust, suspicion and turmoil among the five current Commissioners." The report states that Martin does not afford his fellow Commissioners "direct and unfettered access to the Commission staff and their expert advice, thereby hindering the ability of other Commissioners to carry out the duties of their offices and the work of the Commission." The report also found that Commission staff have not been "effectively managed." When Martin first became Chairman, he "imposed a major reshuffling of FCC staff throughout the agency." While the report said that a "certain amount of reorganization is not unprecedented" when a new Chairman begins his term, the reorganization "was highly unusual in both its breadth (nearly every senior position at the agency changed hands) and its depth (even a number on non-management line staffers found themselves inexplicably reassigned)." Calling it a "waste of resources, the report pointed out that senior employees with "extensive experience and expertise" were reassigned to junior-level positions; as a result, "it appears that some important Commission proceedings were delayed."

o Committee Methodology

Over the course of its investigation, the Committee staff reviewed "several hundred thousand documents, including 95 boxes of paper documents; conducted 73 interviews of current and former FCC employees and individuals associated with the telecommunications industry; solicited and received e-mails from FCC employees and contractors at a secure e-mail address established for this purpose, and reviewed dozens of allegations." The report pointed out that since the investigation, Chairman Martin has taken "some small steps" to ad-

dress some of the problems outlined in the report.

The Committee also emphasized that not everything they found is included in its report: " A few allegations were received so recently that they have not been investigated and are not included [in the report]. We have also excluded matters that seemed trivial per se. Still, other allegations have not been adequately investigated because the FCC has not yet produced all of the records requested by the Committee."

CDXA Speakers Take to the Road

On Saturday, December 6 Dick Williams (W3OA) and John Scott (K8YC) took to the road to address Chapter #126 of the Quarter Century Wireless Association on CW Skimmer. Jack Emerson (W4TJE) asked CDXA if we'd provide a program for the technical meeting agenda. Besides being the Vice President and program chairman of the QCWA Chapter, Jack is also a member of CDXA. Dick provided a good synopsis of CW Skimmer and even provided a live demo of what a CW Skimmer screen looks like. Dick was also able to report the benefit offered by Skimmer technology for contesting based on the recently completed CQWW CW Contest.

Dick and John didn't feel like they were total strangers at the meeting, however. Besides Jack Emerson, other members of the QCWA Chapter present who were also members of CDXA were: Kent Miller (K4MK), Wayne Ashworth (W4HG), and Tommie Wood (N4YZ).

Pictured below is Dick making his well received presentation. Dick's presentation is currently residing on the Raleigh Amateur Radio Society website.



The Back Page—What's Inside

A full issue this month. . .

DX King competition is now in full swing. Don't miss the fun in 2009. See Front Page.

Lay the **big contest dates** in your 2009 calendar now. See Page 2.

More chances to win some CDXA awards in the ARRL DX Contest coming up. See Page 3.

Not enough things to do? Take a look at the ARRL's **Triple Play Award** to get you through 2009. See Page 4.

CWAC Wrap-up. Who won what at the Annual Meeting? See Page 5.

Having trouble **tracking your DX King progress**? You can automate the process. See Page 7.

A venue for the **Charlotte Hamfest Dinner** has been found! It's steak instead of sesame chicken in '09. See Page 7.

Oh my gosh! Was it really that long ago? **Nostalgia time**. . . . See Page 8.

Sunny Italy in Winter. Greetings from Fabrizio! Page 9.

Editorial—FCC gets more than a “tap” from Congress. A long read, but a must read. Page 9.

CDXA makes **CW Skimmer presentation** to QCWA Chapter #126. See Page 13.

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