



The Pileup

Newsletter of the CDXA

A Visit to the First ARRL KP4 State Convention (With a Side Trip to Arecibo!)

Lou Dietrich, N2TU

In January, CDXA members Dennis, K7BV and Lou N2TU along with Ted, HI3TEJ attended the first annual ARRL Puerto Rico State Convention in Hatillo.

N4QT	Hal Bouton	President
W4GRW	Bill Fisher	Vice-Pres.
W3ZL	Cliff Wagoner	Sec.-Treas.
K4MD	Joe Simpkins	Cluster Mgr.
W3OA	Dick Williams	Contest Mgr.
W3GQ	Paul Sturpe	W4 QSL Bureau Manager
WB4BXW	Wayne Setzer	Webmaster
NV4A	John Forbus	Editor

Demonstrating commitment to this first ever event, ARRL President Kay Cragie, N3KN, and Greg Sarratt, W4OZK, Southeast Director, participated in the forums and manned the well-prepared ARRL booth..

This convention was well attended, with over 1100 KP4's browsing the flea market, attending seminars, demo'ing the Yaesu product line, renewing acquaintances and generally having a great time.

The Puerto Rican hams are a welcoming bunch, full of good humor and cordiality. The island hosts some world class DXers, 6M ops and VHFers. The three "Amigos" (Dennis, Ted and I) felt truly at home swapping ham stories

and shaking hands with our on-air Friends. It was remarkable to see a number of active, younger (no gray hair!) hams in attendance as well.

Puerto Rico is a hotbed of ham activity. There are quite a number of clubs and associations spread across the island. ARES activity is very well organized and prepared.

As part of our 'duties' in Puerto Rico, Dennis and I had to check out the special event FT2000 and FT5000 Yaesu radios, of course! After setting up on Friday, we managed to log a few contacts as Portable KP4. As active as KP4 is on the airways, we still generated a CW pile-up. It was a blast, as can be seen by the wide grins on our faces!

After successfully 'testing' the equipment, we were invited to a private tour of the Arecibo Radio Telescope Observatory. Dr. José "Otis" Vicens, NP4G, arranged a visit for a small



CDXA PacketCluster & Other Communication Systems

K4MD (AR Cluster via Telnet)	k4md.no-ip.com
W4DXA (AR Cluster via Telnet)	w4dxa.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)	Skyland Family Restaurant, 4544 South Boulevard, Charlotte, NC

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group of us to have a behind the scenes, all access, tour of the Arecibo facility. Our group was chauffeured to Arecibo through some rather hilly, winding and narrow roads by Juan Montijo, WP4OV, who seemed unfazed by the traffic, road conditions, and passengers oohing and aaahing! He is truly a Master and a Gentleman!

When we arrived at the facility, we were greeted by Angel Vazquez, WP3R, who assigned personal tour guides and vans. This facility is immense, and it is impossible to describe its size. The dish, built into a natural sink-hole, is 1000 feet in diameter and 167 feet deep. It is lined with 40,000 perforated metal panels. The dome above the dish is 450 feet over the dish and weighs 900 tons! ...That's 1.8 million pounds! The dome is on moveable tracks which allow it to be rotated. There are 26 electric motors which control the platform. These motors drive the dome to any position with millimeter precision. If the supporting cables expand or contract with temperature changes, there is a compensating system to maintain the scope's focus.



Arecibo Observatory! This is a ham's dream! A visit to a REAL EME station! On steroids!

The Pileup

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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.

Yearly dues are \$25.00. A second licensed Amateur family member living in the same household can join for \$5.00 for a total family price of \$30.00 per year. The total price for 3 or more licensed family members living in the same household is only \$35.00 per year. All family members enjoy full member status. Dues are payable annually in December by check or through the CDXA website, 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.

KP4LCL, Israel, who drove us around the dish, is one of the Technicians who service the facility and described what it's like to maintain the dish, dome and receiving equipment. It is truly a 24/7/365 job. You could tell by his enthusiasm, it's a job he loves. Ham radio and radio telescopes, what's not to love!

Unfortunately, we were not able to go into the dome due to scientific experiments in progress. Just as well, I only had one spare change of underwear! Remember, the dome is suspended over 450 feet above the dish!

Following the ride around the dish, we visited the maintenance/ power center where some of the equipment is housed. We were greeted by Dana, K8YUM. Dana described the power requirements of the facility and how the giant klystron tubes are changed out. The photo shows an example of one of the spare klystron tubes used in the transmitter.



As with everything at Arecibo, it is huge. Replacing the tube is a major undertaking with overhead cranes and electric hoists.

Directly adjacent to the Maintenance Center is the nerve center of Arecibo. The Control Center, Radio Room and Computer Center is something out of Star Trek! I was amazed, however, that there wasn't a scientist in sight! The

Chief Scientist's console, lined with monitors was devoid of human presence! Dana, shown here at the normally empty



Chief Scientist's console, explained that most observations are done remotely or stored on disk for future forwarding. I should have known there was a way to remote the largest radio telescope in the world!

To summarize, we had a tremendous visit to Puerto Rico, making new friends, greeting old ones, playing radio from a DX entity, eating delicious homemade Puerto Rican cuisine, touring Arecibo with narration by fellow hams, and basking in Puerto Rican hospitality.

Oh, did I mention we also worked at the Yaesu booth!?



DX King News

Dick Williams, W3OA



Item 1: Full details of our DX King Contest and your chances to win a tablet computer are on page 3 of the [January Pileup](#).

Item 2: Here are the scores for the 2013 DX King competition I have as of February 28:

Call	Category	Countries	Zones	Total
K5EK	Unlimited	245	40	285
K7BV	Unlimited	238	40	278
W4HG	Unlimited	227	40	267
K4GHS	Unlimited	209	40	249
W3GQ	Unlimited	200	39	239
W3ZL	Formula	171	33	204
K2SX	Unlimited	163	38	201
K2SX	Unlimited	139	35	174
W3OA	Unlimited	134	35	169
K4NC	Unlimited	124	33	157
N2TU	Unlimited	121	31	152
NV4A	Unlimited	120	30	150
K4DXA	Unlimited	114	31	145
W1AJT	Unlimited	103	33	136
W4CWA	Unlimited	104	31	135
W4WNT	Formula	98	24	122
N4PQX	Unlimited	84	36	120



There's still time to step up and try to win the coveted 2013 DX King Award

Item 3: Don't forget to send me (w3oa@roadrunner.com) your DX marathon scores as of the last day of each month after your score reaches 100.

2013 Field Day
Dick Williams, W3OA



It's not too early to start thinking about Field Day. Operations will be Saturday and Sunday, June 22 and 23. CDXA will be operating W4DXA from the QTH of KI4TZ, Joe Barkley's home and station, just north of Chester, SC. The picture below shows four of our operators from last year wearing the handsome tee shirts each CDXA participant received. We will have a similar, but different color, shirt this year.



Next month's Pileup will have more details on our plans. For now, please put June 22 and 23 on your calendar and let me know when you can operate and your preferred mode, CW or SSB. I also need your tee shirt size. Email me at w3oa@roadrunner.com.

New Deputy W4 QSL Bureau Manager Named

You may have seen the picture on the CDXA website of W3GQ's cat checking cards. As Paul has discovered, the cat, AKA WN4CAT, is actually very good at it. In fact, he's doing such a good job that the Board has unanimously decided to appoint him



Deputy Bureau Manager. Paul comments that he's not only very proud of WN4CAT and the work he's doing, but he's also relieved that he doesn't have to do it all himself. As for WN4CAT, using his paw to communicate with a straight key, he had this to say:

VUCC and Then Some

Ted, W4VHF, mentioned to me last month that his wife Itice, K4LVV, has 544 confirmed grid squares on 6 meters. (Itice says it's now 546!) Being an HF kind of guy, I did some reading on the VHF/UHF Century Club (VUCC) award, which is ARRL's way of recognizing the number of grid squares hams have worked above 50MHz. Just as with DXCC, which requires 100 entities to earn a certificate, VUCC requires 100 grid squares on 6 or 2 meters. (Awards are given for smaller numbers as the frequency goes up.) ARRL maintains a list of 6m VUCC holders on <http://www.arrl.org/system/vucc/view/VUCC-6M-20130401-USLetter.pdf> which gives calls in descending order of grid squares worked. If you look at the list, you'll see K4LVV in the top 100 in the world. Itice says she got her license in 1983, which turns out to have been the perfect time to start collecting grid squares, since January 1, 1983 marked the beginning of VUCC, and only contacts from that date forward count toward the award. Itice has a personal goal of 550 confirmed grids. She adds that if

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she could pry QSLs from a few contacts from years past, she'd be closer.

A quick scan of the 6m ARRL list shows some other CDXAers, including Ric, AA4SC who, with 513 grid squares worked, makes it clear he doesn't spend all his time making great BBQ. Other CDXAers on the list are Gary, K4MQG; Marc, N4UFP; Paul, AA4ZZ; John, K8YC; and Ron, AA4S ...and I apologize to anyone I missed.

An E-Mail QSO With W4DTB

Since not all of us got a chance to meet our new member and Hiram Percy Maxim Memorial Award winner, Derek Brown, W4DTB, when he was presented with his award at the Hamfest Banquet (see the [March Pileup](#), Page 2) he was kind enough to provide the following via e-mail.

Derek says his first introduction to ham radio was from a story in "Make" Magazine about working satellites. He did some research, ordered the Technician Class study manual and decided that he would just take the first test so he could use an HT. At the VE testing session at a meeting of the Orange County Radio Amateurs (OCRA) he was fortunate to meet his Elmer, Bruce, N1LN. After a visit to Bruce's station (a serious contest station with 3x100' towers: check out pictures on N1LN's QRZ.com page), Derek says he was more excited than ever, and as a result got his General and Extra tickets. With Bruce's help, Derek was able to set up his own station, including a Kenwood TS-940 and a 26' DX-88 Vertical. Derek lives in an antenna restricted neighborhood, so his antenna choices were limited.

When asked about his ham-related interests, especially DXing and contesting, Derek says "... I have been doing quite a bit of contesting, although I hope to do more in coming years. Along with Bruce, I have been able to work the CQ WW SSB Contest (placing first in the in the US in the Multi-Operator Two Transmitter class), as well as operating as a bonus station in the NC QSO party and

many other contests. On my own, I work SSB and RTTY contests, placing 1st in the Rookie Low Power Category in the US in the 2011 CQ WPX SSB Contest, (and fifth in the world in the Rookie category. Ed.) and look forward to contributing to the CDXA club scores! ...Most of my operating is on Digital Modes, PSK, RTTY, JT65 and MFSK, but I dabble in CW as well. I also enjoy working Satellite Qs on my HT. As for my favorite part of the hobby, I enjoy mostly Contesting and DX, as there is nothing better than adding another one to the log."

Somehow, Derek has also found time to found the Youth Amateur Radio Association (YARCA) which Derek says "...is focusing largely on helping Boy Scouts (although I have a whole bunch of new content coming online hopefully this summer). The goal of the group is more to introduce prospective HAMS to the hobby, because although many sites exist to teach people how to get their TECH ticket, there is very little in the way of encouraging young HAMs to join. ... As for the future of the group, we plan to try to hold some seminars with local troops as well as host a few special event stations to see if we can get more individuals interested in Amateur Radio."

Derek also has interests outside ham radio. He says "...I am a fairly avid debater, this year traveling to as far away as Harvard and Yale to debate. I have a lot of interest in Computer Science, and have been working on several computer programming projects, as well as interning at a local IT Startup."

So, welcome to CDXA, Derek. We're looking forward to getting to know you, and to having your help with our contest scores.



Derek Ready to Work Some DX

TOP SECRET: DXpedition to P5 in Planning Stages

Sure, North Korea has made it clear lately that it wants to nuke us. And, yeah, we're threatening them with B-2s, stealth fighter jets and warships. But, there seems to be a grass roots diplomatic effort going on, led by a certain well-known basketball player and cross dresser, who's become friendly with North Korean Dictator Kim Jung Un. Apparently during the b-ball game that our basketball playing friend attended with Kim Jung Un, they chatted about North Korea loosening up a bit. Your intrepid editor has learned from a highly confidential and unnamed source that, as a possible result of that visit and the conversations which took place, serious discussions are underway between an experienced team of DXpeditioners and the North Korean government. When asked when we can expect a definitive answer about the timing of the trip, the source said this. "We expect to have details finalized soon, with the DXpedition scheduled for next April 1."

Since North Korea is at the top of every "Most Wanted" list (including some classified Government lists we probably don't want to know about) my source explained to me that the team has come up with a new, and unprecedented, way to manage pileups as well as to give everyone an equal chance to work P5. The basic idea is that you will be able to go to the team's website, make a donation, and sign up for one or more specific time/band/mode slots for a *guaranteed* contact. The more you donate, the more slots you can sign up for. When your designated time slot arrives, they'll call you, you call them, and you're in the log. It seemed from the conversation that actually hearing each other is an option.

We hope to learn more about this very confidential but exciting trip in the near future, so stay tuned to the *Pileup*.

The Wayback Machine

This month, the Wayback machine goes back a little over a hundred years to have a short look at the beginning of radio regulation in the US. On December 13, 1912, the Radio Act of 1912 went into effect. The Act mandated that all radio stations in the United States be licensed by the federal government, as well as mandating that seagoing vessels continuously monitor distress frequencies. The original bill was initiated during the investigations following the sinking of the Titanic, and also undoubtedly due to pressure from Government and commercial "wireless" contingents that didn't think too much of all the unlicensed and unregulated amateur radio operators. The Act not only required that amateur radio operators (as well as commercial operators) be licensed, but limited amateurs to wavelengths below 200 meters, and a "transformer input" not greater than a kilowatt. The Department of Commerce and Labor was responsible for issuing licenses. Applicants had to know international and national regulations, state that they knew Morse Code, and provide answers in writing to a series of questions asked by examiners. Interestingly, no actual code test was given.

Whether the Act was meant to suppress amateur operation by pushing it into frequencies thought by many at the time to be useless for long distance communications, or to protect it, the effect was that hams led the way in effectively discovering how HF propagation works for long-distance communications. So, Happy DXing!

The Brits are also celebrating the 100th Birthday of the Radio Society of Great Britain this year. The RSGB was formed on July 13, 1913. We're letting you know early in case you want to attend the Centenary Dinner this coming July 13, to be held near Bletchley Park. The price for the Dinner is less than 30 quid. Not a bad deal at all! Happy Birthday, RSGB.

W3OA Announced as New INDEXA Secretary-Treasurer

In a recent e-mail to The International DX Association (INDEXA) members, INDEXA President Gary Dixon, K4MQG, announced that CDXA's Contest Manager, Dick Williams, W3OA, is taking on an additional role as Secretary-Treasurer for INDEXA. Dick is replacing long-time Secretary-Treasurer Bill Jennings, W4UNP, also a CDXAer. Bill will be taking a place on the INDEXA Board. With Dick's new role, all three of the senior INDEXA officers, Gary; John Scott, K8YC, Vice President; and Dick; remain CDXA members.

Congratulations to Dick on his new position.

Welcome to A New Member

CDXA welcomes K4BYN, Louis Alexander, 112 Windel Dr., Raleigh, NC 27609, 919-306-0887, k4byn@nc.rr.com. K4BYN was originally licensed in 1955 as KN4BYN, and he says he was "...held at gunpoint by W4MBD & K4CIA to join." Thanks to Bob and Bill for the friendly persuasion.

A Little Background on K4CEB

As reported last month in the *Pileup*, Eric Sossoman, K4CEB, was the lucky winner of the FT-950 Yaesu transceiver presented by Dennis, K7BV. It's worth noting that Eric is a second generation CDXAer. His father, Larry, SK, was a CDXA member, and also held the call K4CEB. Looking at the picture, Eric seems to be asking Dennis "...so the 950 is about this big, huh?"



...And a Bit More from the Wayback Machine

If you've read through this issue, it has probably come to your attention that this is the April edition of the *Pileup*. But, who in the world came up with the idea of April Fool's Day in the first place? Apparently, no one really knows for sure, but it seems that the French may be to blame. In 1582, the French adopted the Gregorian calendar, which shifted the observance of New Year's Day from the end of March to the first of January.

Apparently some folks didn't get the word, and continued to ring in the New Year on April 1. According to this version of events, they were made the butt of jokes and pranks because of their foolishness, leading to an annual tradition, which ultimately spread throughout Europe ...and made its way over the pond.

Of course, there are other, older versions, from Roman times, and even from the Hindu world. ...but it seems more fun to blame the French.

Your editor's favorite April Fool's joke of all time occurred on April 1, 1996, when Taco Bell took out a full page ad in every major newspaper in the country announcing that they had bought the Liberty Bell. The ad was so well done that it really took a double take and a look at the date at the top of the page to be sure it was a joke.

In any case, I hope you all survived another April Fool's Day intact.



The Back Page

- Read about Lou and Dennis' adventures in KP4-land, and their trip to Arecibo, on Page 1.
- The March DX King scores show K5EK building a lead. Is someone going to make a push to catch up? ...Stay tuned.
- Be sure to mark 22 and 23 June on your calendar for Field Day, and let Dick, W3OA know what you can do and when you can help.
- Have a look at K4LVV's impressive VUCC numbers.
- Find out more about Derek, W4DTB, the Hiram Percy Maxim Award Winner, and new CDXA member.
- Congratulations to Dick, W3OA, for his new position as Secretary-Treasurer of INDEXA.
- Read a short summary of the Radio Act of 1912 ...and,
- ...Don't forget, it's April.

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See something wrong with your address label? Notify W3ZL at once, please.