

# The Pileup

## Newsletter of the CDXA

### Carolina QSO Party

John Forbus, NV4A

Here's an excerpt from an email announcing the North Carolina QSO Party, and asking for Club participation. The South and North Carolina events are sharing a single weekend this year. It isn't exactly a DX Contest, but it's a good chance to hone your operating skills, especially since if you call CQ, you're likely to get a pileup going. One new twist this year is that finding counties starting with letters in CAROLINA gives participants extra points. The only one of the 100 North Carolina counties starting with an "I" (or at least so I've been told) is Iredell, so if you live in Iredell County, you may get some extra attention. If you are planning any sort of operation with two or more operators, let the NC QSO Party folks know at the site shown below.

AA4ZZ	Paul Trotter	President
W4GRW	Bill Fisher	Vice-Pres.
W3ZL	Cliff Wagoner	Sec./Treas.
K4MD	Joe Simpkins	Cluster Mgr.
NV4A	John Forbus	Contest Mgr.
W3GQ	Paul Sturpe	4th Call Area Bureau Mgr.
WB4BXW	Wayne Setzer	Webmaster
K8YC	John Scott	Editor

Dear North Carolina Amateur Radio Club,

The 2018 North Carolina QSO Party is on February 25th. This will be day 2 of the Carolina Weekend, following the South Carolina

QSO Party on the 24th. We are anticipating a great event this year. We would like to put your club on our list of participants for this year's exciting event.

If your club has any special plans for location, modes, expeditions, etc. we are eager to hear about them. You can list your club's activation plans here: <http://ncqsoparty.org/map/create.php>.

The Club category rules are listed as follows:

Two or more persons using a valid FCC issued club call perform operating and logging functions. Operation may be from one permanent or portable location only. The location must remain fixed throughout the event. More than one simultaneous transmitted signal may be on the air in this category only. Clubs entering as "Phone only" are limited to Low Power. If Mixed Mode the entry can be either Low or High Power. This year's bonus stations and points are as follows:

50 Points each for working the following bonus stations:

- NI4BK aboard the battleship North Carolina,

*(Continued on page 2)*

CDXA PacketCluster & Other Communication Systems	
K4MD (AR Cluster via Telnet)	k4md.no-ip.com
W4DXA (AR Cluster via Telnet)	w4dx.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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- W4DW RARS Club station,
- W1VOA located at Receiving Site "C" of The Voice of America,
- NC4QP North Carolina QSO Party hallmark station, Any station in Alleghany (ALL) and Columbus (COL) county.

Please visit the new website for NCQP at <http://ncqsoparty.org/> to see new features, including the CAROLINA Spelling Bee.

You can see the county activations here: <http://ncqsoparty.org/map/>

You can sign up for the NC QSO Party email reflector here: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ncqsoparty>

...Sounds like fun.

### Please, Mr. Postman

To help the price rise  
seem less vicious,  
couldn't they make  
the Stickum delicious?

I'm not asking the Post Office  
any other favors  
except, please could we have  
a choice of flavors?

--Ruth Stewart Schenley

### **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.

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 to the Secretary/Treasurer:

Cliff Wagoner, W3ZL  
218 Ohenry Avenue  
Davidson, NC 28036

Address, telephone, and email address changes should be directed to the Secretary/Treasurer at the above address or via email at: [jew53@cornell.edu](mailto:jew53@cornell.edu).

## ARRL DX Contest Reminder



by John Forbus, NV4A

Last month, we gave you the details you need to get ready for the ARRL DX Contest. This is just a reminder that the CW portion of the Contest starts Friday evening 16 February. SSB starts Friday evening 2 March. Good propagation or bad, let's all do as much as we can. ... and a couple of other reminders: Don't forget to put "Carolina DX Association" as your club in your entry. Also, please send me your score summary (number of contacts, multipliers, and final score) along with your entry category, single or all band, power level, with or without assistance (such as Packet Cluster) at [jf4a@aol.com](mailto:jf4a@aol.com) as soon as you can after each portion of the contest.

I need to have all the info in time to award prizes at the CDXA dinner on March 9, so I will need all of your info for CW and SSB by noon local time on March 7. Last, but not least, even though we base our prizes on raw score, for the benefit of our official club ranking, please don't forget to submit your logs to the ARRL. Here's the submission schedule:

### **New 5-Day Deadline!**

Entries for the CW competition must be uploaded or post-marked by **2359 UTC February 23, 2018**.

Entries for the **Phone** competition must be uploaded or postmarked by **2359 UTC March 9, 2018**.



## Contesting or Not?

By John Scott, K8YC

When I first became a ham, on selected weekends I would hear a lot of incessant calling of CQ that I came to understand was a radio contest. The Internet was not to arrive for the everyday user until 20 years later, so the only way to know what was happening on those contest weekends was to carefully follow contest announcements in the various bulletins that appeared in QST or CQ. Without knowing the “exchange” in a particular contest and being before the WARC bands of 30m, 17m, and 12m became available, many, including myself, would simply turn off the radio. That was precisely what a former member of CDXA, Todd Brady, W4WTB (now N4LA) reported in the February 2001 issue of the Pileup. But as we found out then, Todd gave contesting a try, and LIKED it! Then, if you move along to the January 2003 issue of the Pileup, you’ll find Todd liked it so much that he won the honors as the BEST CDXAer in the 2002 version of CQWW SSB by amassing 2,538,963 points. Moving ahead to 2007, we find Todd competing as a member of the five man CDXA team in CQWW, claiming 3.4 million points, and winning club honors for top SSB op once again as reported in the January 2008 issue of the Pileup. We might surmise that one CAN find fun in contesting!

When I first joined CDXA, one of the founders of CDXA, the late Roger Burt, N4ZC (SK), who was both a consummate DXer as well as contesteer, used to say to me, “Enter CQ World Wide Contest and you can earn DXCC in a single weekend.” Really? I had always thought making contacts with 100 countries would be the work of a lifetime. And then using the International Call Book to actually get confirmations? That seemed to only reduce the probability of reaching the pinnacle called DXCC.

After listening to Roger, sometime in late 1997 I bought a version of CT, an early MS-DOS contesting program. With only a loop antenna in my attic, an R-7000 vertical, and operating barefoot, I struggled to get what I recall was about 45,000 points in my first foray into contesting. But, I had picked up perhaps a dozen new DXCC entities. In the next few evenings after the contest, I prepared my QSL cards for sending. That process was repeated in the ARRL International DX Contests in the Spring of

1998 and both CQWW contests in the Fall of 1998. In March 1999, I received my DXCC Mixed award. Many of the entities making up that first 100 were contest contacts.

A recent article in the National Contest Journal addressed the question of “Why contesting?” The answer was not what you might have expected in a contesting journal. The answer was that there are several reasons for contesting and several types of contesters. Casual or curious contesters, DX seeking contesters, avid contesters, and passionate contesters all can be found in the mix. The reasons for being there are just as varied, but the bottom line is that every contestant needs “the other guy” for a contact so all contestants share that bond. What every contest brings is (1) the need to understand how to properly use your equipment, (2) an understanding of propagation so you know where to look (both frequency wise and direction wise) to have the best chance of improving your score, (3) an understanding of the method of wading into the pileup for a needed multiplier and getting out with a contact in a short time, and (4) an overall strategy of operation for operating some or all of a 48 hour contest. Waddyouknow—all of these skills are also needed when DXing!

My contest goals in the early going were to earn DXCC entities. As I’ve moved up in my DXCC count, my contest goals have turned to collecting needed countries and zones for the CQ DX Marathon and CDXA’s DX King awards. That is because the zone and entity total counts start anew each year. I will probably never be a passionate contesteer, and that works for me. Yet, everyone can enter each contest knowing whether you are a passionate contesteer or a casual contesteer, all you meet on the air will gladly accept your QSO to improve their scores. Bottom line: Choose what goal suits you and run a contest for the experience and skill building, and by all means, have fun.

With the loss of our dear friend N4ZC in 2017, I thought it would be informative to check Roger’s claim of earning DXCC in a weekend, even though propagation conditions were not ideal. At the top of the next page are my results for a modest effort (less than 10 hours of the 48 allowed in the chair in each contest):

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Contest	Countries Worked	Zones Worked	QSOs	LoTW Confirmed Countries as of 1/6/18	LoTW Confirmed Zones as of 1/6/18
CQWW SSB	102	28	393	80	22
CQWW CW	100	29	233	63	23

*(Continued from page 3)*

Roger was right! Also, LoTW makes getting DXCC credits easy and without cost.

Here are the things that make it more pleasant for the contester of today. The comments presume use of N1MM Logger+ as your logger because that is what I find an excellent, easy to use logger:

N1MM Logger+ Contesting logger. This free-ware written for Windows does all the “accounting” that used to be such a drudge for contesters of yore. It counts your countries and zones on each band, keeps a running scoresheet, communicates with your radio to allow controlling your radio from the computer keyboard and reads the radio’s frequency, integrates cluster data (if operating “assisted”) to display stations to be worked, identifies “dupes” of stations already worked on a band, and identifies new countries and zones to grab as multipliers. A few clicks after contest completion will produce a Cabrillo file to be sent to the contest sponsor, and an ADIF file to load to your regular station log.

Clusters (if operating assisted). For the more casual operator or the operator seeking to enhance his DXCC count, searching for stations and pouncing on the ones needed (called “Search and Pounce” or S&P) is probably preferred to “running” where a station stays on one frequency and calls CQ repeatedly looking for contacts. If Cluster data is integrated into your contest plan, data received from spots reported on a Cluster will be captured by N1MM Logger+ and displayed on a band map using color to inform you which spots represent multipliers, normal contacts, or dupes. For CQWW, N1MM Logger+ will even tell you with color if the contact counts as a double multiplier (both a new entity and new zone).

Logbook of the World (LoTW). Passionate con-

testers seem to like QSLing to encourage you to work them in ensuing contests, but before LoTW, that task was a drudge. LoTW makes QSLing a breeze because it is only a few clicks to perform an upload. The windfall to the contester who is chasing DXCC entities is that you are likely to get many more QSLs confirmed quickly at minimal cost than ever possible via mailed QSLs. (See the chart above.)

CW Keying. So you’re not a CW operator? CW contest exchanges are highly structured. You can count on the data coming at you to be in a pre-defined way. Also, most contesters operate simplex to save bandwidth. You’ll need to copy the callsign given by the caller, but if you are using the Cluster, your task is eased somewhat by the cluster spot identifying that station. But, remember, some folks are notoriously bad at accurately posting spots, so verify the spot. After hearing the call of the other station type it into N1MM Logger+, then press a single function key on your keyboard to send your call at your chosen speed. If your call is heard by the station called, you’ll hear your callsign come back followed by 599 (or 5NN) and the exchange. In CQWW the exchange is a zone—a number from 01 to 40. You are aided in N1MM Logger+ if you’ve already keyed in the callsign of the calling station, because N1MM will generally identify the caller’s zone from a Master Call database that is loaded into the software before the contest. You then press a single Function key to send your report and zone which has been loaded to the software as part of the contest setup before the contest starts. You then type the zone received from the calling station into N1MM Logger+ and press ENTER to record the QSO and increment the score counter. (Note: Contest signal reports are almost always 59 or 599 by default, so contest logging software will prefill that field with the default. Also, the Master Call database will

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suggest the zone you should receive based on the station callsign or prefix or both so you can check whether you copied the exchange correctly. (It is still your job to ensure it is correct!) Bottom line—nobody does any rag chewing in a contest, so your contest CW operation will consist of button punching! Only occasionally will you find the need to key anything.

If you're a DXer seriously chasing DXCC entities, try contesting. Try CW, too. Watch the QSLs roll in. Guaranteed, or your money back! One last thing, Roger (N4ZC) did an informative introduction to contest strategy for world wide contests like CQWW in the October 2000 issue of the Pileup. Look up Roger's article in the Pileup archives. Over the years, we all learned many things from Roger. Fortunately, we still can. I encourage you to read Roger's article.



### DX King News

John Forbus, NV4A



Details of our DX King competition are in the January 2017 Pileup—available in the Pileup archives.

Here are the first reports as of January 31, as they were posted by participants. This looks familiar with Ed, K5EK in the lead. Good hunting to all of you, and we hope that more join in this yearly event. With the ARRL DX Contest, CW and Phone, coming up soon, everyone has a chance to put some big numbers in the list. Don't forget that \$100 Amazon Gift Certificate. Just keep your fingers crossed for some decent propagation. Maybe FT8 will help....

Callsign	Cat.	Entities	Zones	Total
K5EK	Unlim.	198	38	233
W1AJT	Unlim.	97	26	123
W3GQ	Unlim.	86	27	113
AA4SC	Unlim.	171	29	100
K8YC	Unlim.	22	15	37

### Look Who's a Radio Amateur!

Most of us who are amateur radio aficionados know that there are over 700,000 radio amateurs in the United States. Many of us have heard the question, "Ham radio? Are people still doing that?"

Well, the next time that happens, you might let it be known that the President of one of America's best known institutions of higher learning, Harvard University, has a "ham" as its President! Lawrence Bacow, KA1FZQ of Brookline, Massachusetts has been selected to become the 29<sup>th</sup> president of Harvard University. We can all gain some comfort knowing that Bacow confessed to being an "uber nerd" while growing up in Pontiac, Michigan and by "... getting his kicks building radios out of Heathkits."

More details at: [Harvard President](#)

### W4GRW Tops CQWW VHF List

The January 2018 issue of CQ magazine showed CDXA's Bill Fisher, W4GRW, as the winner of the plaque as the NUMBER ONE 2 Meter Single Op in the USA in the 2017 edition of CQWW VHF contest. Bill operated from atop the Blue Ridge just outside Boone, NC.

Bill and his son, Josh, have been quite successful operating from this locale, despite the fact that Boone is nowhere near the highly populated regions of the Northeast USA which usually assists 2m contact activity. Bill offers the following: "... it seems the "Fisher Boys", Josh and I, have found a 'niche' in the 2m Single Op class. Most home stations will make a few 2m contacts, but since 6m is so much "sexier" when band openings are good, as soon as they make that first 6m contact, they are no longer stay a 2m only single op station. Josh and I hold 5 of the top 8 highest scores recorded in the USA for the 2m Single Op class! I also hold the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest score in the USA Hilltopper Class, when I won it in 2012 after a lightning strike in Boone played havoc with our usual operating location. Of course, CDXA's 'Teddy Freddy' Goldthorpe, W4VHF, was the KING of CQWW-VHF with 8 top 100 scoring records in the Rover Class which was his favorite."

Our hats are off to you, Bill. Take a bow!

## A New DXCC Entity

During the ARRL Board of Directors meeting on January 19-20, the board voted on a change to the criteria for inclusion of an entity to the DXCC list. A new Subsection (d) permits inclusion if “The entity has a separate IARU member society *and* is included on the U.S. State Department’s **Independent States of the World.**” With that vote, Kosovo (Z6) became the 340<sup>th</sup> entity on the DXCC list for contacts made after 0000Z on 21 January 2018. The January 2018 version of the DXCC list records the inclusion of Kosovo. The number of entities needed to be included on the DXCC Honor Roll now stands at 331.

## Welcome New Members

The past month has been a busy one as regards new member applications. Since the last issue of the Pileup was published, we welcome the following new members: **Lee Johnson (KB4QDQ)**, of Fairview, NC, **Paul Greaves (W4FC)** of Greenville, SC, **Lonnie Craven (K4KZ)** of Matthews, NC, and **Jim Crisco (WA4YIZ)** of Lincolnton, NC. A member returning to the fold is **Edward Miller (AD4YB)** of Greensboro, NC. All of these names now appear in our online roster.

## Staying Power Wins the Race

By John Scott

When I began the DXCC chase in earnest in mid-1996, I read everything I could to understand the “ins and outs” of DXing. Of course, it didn’t hurt to have at my disposal the years of experience surrounding me by the DXers of the Carolina DX Association. One of the books I read traced very accurately the various “epochs” I was to pass through in finally arriving at the threshold of the DXCC Honor Roll. One thing pointed out is that hunting for needed DXCC entities gets tougher and tougher as the “wanted” list gets shorter and shorter.

A convenient source of information on the DXCC “climb” of our members is the CDXA Club League as published in Club Log. I recently noticed some stand-outs on the list that I felt deserved some recognition for their staying power in pursuing their personal DXCC goals. At the top of the next column is a table showing the people who had DXCC counts of over 150 entities reported on Club Log and who have added 8 or more entities in the past two years:

Name	Callsign	Count (7/15)	Count (1/18)
Brad Humphries	AE4VJ	266	275
Tony Lewis	KG4TAH	272	281
Bill Garwood	N4GBK	183	191
Art Tolda*	W1AJT	289	300

\*Art is making a second climb. He also has 330 entities as VE3UTT

Congratulations to these people for staying in the hunt.

## Roving Reporter Visits Larry Knain, W6NWS



Raleigh, North Carolina was the destination for the Roving Reporter when the weather broke this month. There I talked with Larry Knain, W6NWS, (pronounced as “kuh-nine”) who was present at the organizational meeting which established CDXA in July 1981. (See: [http://](http://www.cdxa.org/cdxa_history.php)

[www.cdxa.org/cdxa\\_history.php](http://www.cdxa.org/cdxa_history.php)) Those who were at the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CDXA will recognize Larry from the photo taken on the shores of Lake Norman at that event.

Larry is still an active DXer and contester. As I visited Larry, he was just winding down from casual participation in the recently concluded CQWW RTTY WPX contest by “only” garnering about 600 QSOs.

**Roving Reporter:** Wow! It’s warm in here, Larry. You must have been running the linear on a high duty cycle during the RTTY contest.

**W6NWS:** That’s the nature of the beast, as you know. Yet, my solid state linear doesn’t throw off as much heat as the tube rigs of my early radio days.

**RR:** Tell us a bit about your early days in amateur radio.

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The 2018 CDXA FT8 Challenge is off to a good start. We already have 14 logs from CDXA members with a total of over 6000 QSOs made in January ...and curiously, 3 logs from DX stations who aren't members. One thing is already obvious as you can see from the QSO details below. We set the bar a bit low for entry into the raffle for the \$25 Amazon Gift Cards. ...so there'll be a lot of competition for the Gift Cards.

The scores were compiled by a program created by Dick, W3OA. He has a file for each log submitted showing what his program “thought” of each QSO in your logs. If you're curious to see your results file, just email Dick at [w3oa@roadrunner.com](mailto:w3oa@roadrunner.com), and he'll send you a copy.

Just a reminder on where to find your WSJT-x logs and how to submit them:

WSJT-x logs are easily located within the WSJT-x program by going to FILE – Open log directory. In the log directory, you will see two log files: wsjtx.log is a Cabrillo log file. wsjtx\_log.adi is the ADIF version of your log. Always, before submitting your log in ADIF format, copy the ADIF log to a separate directory of your choice, leaving the original log in place, and change the name of the “new” log file to “[YOUR CALL][DATE in MMDD format]wsjtx\_log.adi”. For example: NV4A0205wsjtx\_log.adi. Once you have your log renamed, upload it to Drop Box at <https://tinyurl.com/y7lynkn8>.

Also, please make sure your submitted logs include *all* of your 2018 FT8 QSOs to date. Dick's program counts all the 2018 QSOs, NOT month by month, but the total for the year, which is what we'll be reporting in the Pileup each month.

One other note. In case you didn't see the article about WSJT-x Version 1.9 on the CDXA website, be sure to read about it at [http://physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/k1jt/FT8\\_DXpedition\\_Mode.pdf](http://physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/k1jt/FT8_DXpedition_Mode.pdf). Joe Taylor is adding a new “FT8 DXpedition” mode, which will apparently be used by the KH1/KH7Z team. The release date hasn't been announced yet, but you'll need to read the article really carefully, as it's going to be somewhat more complicated than “regular” FT8 QSOs.

Here are the logs submitted for January:

Call	Station Grid	80m	40m	30m	20m	17m	15m	12m	10m	6m	Total
AA4R	FM05	62	176	200	184	301	136	24	19	0	1102
W3OA	EM95	179	269	150	323	66	61	10	7	5	1070
W3GQ	EM95	235	190	140	183	161	39	7	2	1	958
K5EK	FM03	106	123	132	285	207	72	6	11	0	942
N4GBK	FM16	80	200	98	130	73	40	7	0	1	629
WA4JHU	EM85	68	153	24	103	66	22	1	0	0	437
W4GEH	EM95	30	111	25	45	27	10	0	0	0	248
W4OCO	FM26	64	60	0	104	1	0	0	0	0	229
W4LK	EM93	3	37	20	72	25	12	2	2	8	181
NV4A	EM95	6	40	46	45	7	0	0	0	0	144
WW4DD	EM94	22	33	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	63
W4WNT	EM94	13	1	6	7	5	1	0	0	1	34
W3ZL	EM95	0	15	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	23
N4APR	EM95	0	2	5	2	0	2	0	0	0	11
TOTAL											6071

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**W6NWS:** Even though I didn't know I was to become an Electrical Engineer at the time, my Dad and I used to frequent surplus equipment stores in Seattle where I grew up. It was always a good source for finding electronic "treasures". My Dad bought me an Amateur Radio License manual and a radiotelegrapher's code manual during one of our visits. Dad wasn't a ham, but we both liked tinkering with electronics, so I guess he thought I'd find something of interest in the license manual. We had a big console radio receiver in our home as did a lot of people in that era. The radio would pick up short wave bands as well as broadcast radio. Hearing a faraway station on that radio fascinated me. I soon began studying the license manual. There was a merchant mariner in our neighborhood who was also a ham. He became my Elmer and administered my Novice exam. That was in 1959 and I was 14 years of age. I soon built a home brew transmitter and acquired a Hallicrafters S-20R receiver dating from the pre-war era. You had to be a Novice for a year in those days, but by 1960 I went to the Federal Building in downtown Seattle to earn my Extra Class license. In those days you sat before an examiner to send and receive 20 wpm CW, and you either used the straight key provided or brought your own "bug". Soon after becoming an Extra, it didn't take me long to move up to a Hallicrafters SX-100 accompanied by a Heathkit DX-40 transmitter.

**RR:** What kinds of things did you like doing in those early days?

**W6NWS:** I must have taken a shine to CW by looking over the radiotelegrapher's code book, because I enjoyed CW and ragchewing early on. But I wasn't yet two years into being a ham when I worked my first DX. It was a station in Fiji, VR2DK—I recall his name as being Owen—that really got me excited about DXing. In those days, I had a 250 foot long Windom antenna secured on to the top of a 125 foot tall tree. It wasn't long before I tried my hand at contesting, and I collected a lot of QSL cards, but never really submitted them for awards.

**RR:** You mentioned being an Electrical Engineer. So somewhere along the way radio must have spurred an interest in EE?

**W6NWS:** I graduated from the University of Washington, which is situated in Seattle, with a degree in EE. Upon graduation, I took a job with IBM in San Jose, CA. That's when I got the W6 call I've had ever since. Not long after starting with IBM, I got my

"Greetings" from Uncle Sam and I went into the U.S. Army and had a tour in Vietnam. Fortunately, IBM put me on "leave" status while in the service, so when I mustered out, I had a job waiting for me in San Jose.

**RR:** As I recall, IBM did the engineering and production of its disc storage in San Jose in those days.

**W6NWS:** That's right, but I never was what one would think of as an electrical engineer. Instead I did most of my work as a software engineer.

**RR:** It's not that unusual that you didn't design circuits as an engineer. It seems like the forte of an engineer is the ability to think logically, an understanding of the economics of product design, and a good foundation in mathematics which can be applied in many different ways. Many of those who I've known as IBM employees have jokingly told me IBM stands for "I've Been Moved". Is that how you ended up in North Carolina?

**W6NWS:** Yes. I'd been moved a few times. I'd been working on ATMs in San Jose. In 1979, my group was consolidated with the banking device group in Charlotte. Fellow CDXAer Scott Douglass, K2SD, and I were in the same group at IBM. In 1986, I moved back to San Jose to work on telephony switches. Then, in 1991 I moved to Raleigh working on telephone call center application software. It was during that first period in Charlotte when Scott and I were present at N4ZC's home for the organizational meeting that created CDXA. But, each move I took my amateur radio along with me. As I mentioned, I had collected QSL cards all along the way but never had submitted them. Maybe it was because I had toted them all from California, but I finally decided to submit them to ARRL. I soon had DXCC using mixed mode. My CW experience reflected itself in a greater interest in contesting, and it was then I learned that a person could earn DXCC in a single contest weekend. Along the way I joined the CW Ops organization which was only offered by invitation. They used to have short contests—like ARRL "sprints"—on Wednesday evenings. Those contests got me excited by being on the "other end" when calling "CQ CW OPS". From those beginnings, I've never wavered from my pleasure in DXing, CW operating, and contesting, but I'm not what some would call a fanatic in pursuing them. I enjoy them all for my own pleasure.

**RR:** A couple of years back at the Charlotte Hamfest, you said you were leaving soon thereafter and heading for Vietnam to visit your spouse's family. Do you get back there often?

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**W6NWS:** Between 2001 and 2012 I visited several times. It was always a joy to bring a radio to BE DX. There's nothing quite like being on the DX end of a pileup!

**RR:** What are you "running" now at your QTH?

**W6NWS:** Through the years, I usually had Kenwood gear, but now I have an Elecraft K3 and an Ameritron ALS1306 solid state amplifier. For antennas I have a 75 foot tower far back in the rear of the property on which I have an M2 LPDA for 30m to 10m. Unfortunately, that is fed by a 300 foot long feedline. Closer to the house, I have a 100 foot tower which has an LPDA for 40m and 30m. I have half slopers off that tower directed toward Europe for the low bands. Fortunately, they do not have a strong directional pattern so are useful for most directions .

**RR:** What are some of the "AHA" moments you've experienced in your years of being a ham?

**W6NWS:** In 1962 I was working 75m on a Sunday morning when word came that there had been an earthquake in Alaska. I soon found what role ham radio has played over and over throughout the years. I was not part of a formal net, but for three days, I handled traffic to get messages to and from Alaska—all while only a teenager.

In the "believe it or not" category, I was having a devil of a time trying to work Baker Island, K1B. My SWR had gone haywire and my radio would only work with 1 WATT output because of the "fold back" circuitry. Somehow, I managed to have a QSO. After signing with the station, I went outside to see if I could figure out what was wrong. I found the feedline to my antenna was severed at the point it exited from the underground conduit. My "antenna" was essentially an unterminated underground coaxial feedline. I had worked an island just north of Central Kiribati—about 2500 miles away—using a buried antenna fed with 1 watt!

**RR:** One more question. What created the most pleasure for you in your years as a ham?

**W6NWS:** I'd have to say that I've really enjoyed getting to know nice people who live in other countries. It gives me a chance to understand their life styles when you get to gab with them a little as in a non-contest situation. And even if you never meet them fact-to-face, you feel a kinship with them. For

example, when I meet "Michael"—SV9CVY—on the air, we always share a hello and know despite the distance by which we are separated, we'll meet again.

**RR:** Thanks, Larry. Let's find a chance to chat on the air when the pileup is not present.

## DX Labs Suite

A Software Review by John Scott, K8YC

A common need of most active radio amateurs is a logging program to keep a record of the attributes of their QSOs, permit them to produce and keep track of QSLs sent and received, assist them in award submissions, and maintain a record of awards earned. There are a number of very good loggers available to hams, but when the word "FREE" is associated with a product, it usually attracts some attention.

After using a free logging program which was short of some needed features in the late 1990s, I chose DX4WIN as my logging program. It does all of the things mentioned in the paragraph above, except its initial cost is about \$90 with periodic upgrades several years apart costing less than half that amount. Several years back, I thought I should investigate just what is available for free for the amateur. I was aware of the popular Logger32. I asked Dick Williams, W3OA, what he was using for his logging and he replied that he used DX Labs Suite so I set out to investigate.

Now, my confession. Since I cut my teeth manually logging, I still keep a paper log, except for contests. I also log to DX4WIN. To test DX Labs' logging module, DX Keeper, I started shadowing my DX4WIN log in DX Keeper since it was quite easy to do using the export/import features available in all logging programs these days. There are many things I like about DX Keeper, so I've continued to use it alongside DX4WIN! So, you can put me in the class of hams who proverbially "wear suspenders and a belt" when it comes to logging!! HI HI

The attractive aspect of DX Labs Suite is that it is actually a suite of eight different programs that can be used alone or together. The suite should fulfill most of the needs one might desire in a well-equipped DX station.

Here is a rundown of the names and functions of the programs in the suite:

**Launcher** If you intend on actively employing several of the programs in the suite, Launcher will allow you to do that in an orderly way and show you in a small

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window which programs are “active”. Launcher also is used to access an updater to all programs and underlying databases used by programs in the suite. If you wish to run only one or two programs in the suite, they can be initiated just like any single program.

**Commander** Here is where you can set the attributes needed for rig control. Define the radios used in your shack and the ports on your computer for CAT control for those radios, and you’re good to go.

**DXKeeper** This is the logging module. It will allow you to store more attributes of a particular QSO than I ever imagined being necessary. Some of them are: propagation conditions during the QSO, detailed information about your QSO partner, details of any contest in which the QSO took place, full particulars of the QSL status for hard copy QSLs including whether sent, received, verified (and for which award), full particulars of online QSL requests. A feature that provides some logging flexibility is that all log entries can be put in one log file since fields in each log record allow specification of Station Call, Operator Call, Owner Call and the station QTH. A handy filter panel allows filtering the log for any subset of the attributes. Once filtered, there is a facility to make wholesale changes. More on that later.

**DXView** Visible in this program’s panel is any information you might wish to know about a particular DXCC entity. Enter a callsign, prefix, or country code and you’ll be presented with the name of the entity, its latitude and longitude, continent, short path and long path distances and headings, time zone, map window, and other items. In this module you can set up all your rotor control parameters.

**Pathfinder** Here’s where you find out your QSL routing. Key in the callsign of the station, either in this app’s screen or in DXKeeper and you’ll be presented with your favorite “callbook” to launch your QSL.

**PropView** Using a gridsquare or the Lat./Long. of a DX locale, PropView will access one of several chosen propagation predictors based on how you configure the software.

**SpotCollector** Set up DXSummit and up to four Telnet accessible clusters in the configuration file to produce spots. Spots are then merged and stored in a Spot Database on your PC, enabling you to monitor, sort, and filter them in real time. If you are using DXKeeper to log QSOs and track progress against DXing awards, SpotCollector will automatically “color”

each spotted station to indicate whether its DXCC entity is unworked or unconfirmed on the spotted band and mode, and whether that band or mode matches your specified DXCC and TopList award objectives. If the currently-open log provides realtime award tracking for the ARRL VUCC, ARRL WAS, CQ DX Marathon, CQ WPX, CQ WAZ, or RSGB IOTA award families, SpotCollector will also automatically “color” each spotted station to indicate whether a confirmed QSO would advance your progress towards one of these awards, based on the objectives specified on the Awards tab of DXKeeper’s Configuration window.

**WinWarbler** WinWarbler provides capabilities to conduct QSOs in the CW, Phone, PSK31, PSK63, and RTTY operating modes. I have not examined WinWarbler in sufficient detail to comment on it. The configuration panels seem to have all the usual questions, but I chose to not disrupt my MMTTY and Digipan setups to test WinWarbler.

DX Labs Suite is written and supported by Dave Bernstein, AA6YQ. The documentation is voluminous. I found the learning curve to be somewhat steep in the early going until I got to know my way around the product. Part of my problem is that I expect software to be somewhat intuitive and self-instructing. Many of the features of the software do that by opening a little note over a command if the mouse is “hovered” over the command. Yet there is so much functionality in this software that sometimes a reading of the instructions is needed to learn how to produce the expected result.

I view DXKeeper as the “anchor” function of the suite. It has a lot of automatic features to both send log data to LoTW and eQSL as well as to retrieve confirmation data from them. Source of a confirmation is part of the log record, so you know if a confirmation will be acceptable to ARRL’s DXCC program. If you find uploading your data to LoTW is somewhat “mystical”, then you’ll enjoy these features. I personally feel I have better control of what I wish to happen if I manually perform the functions. As an example of relying too much on automation, I have encountered “false” confirmations on eQSL from people who operated using a special event callsign, loaded those log records to their logging programs, and then had their default station callsign used for their upload to eQSL.

The filters in DXKeeper allow much control. I uploaded all my QSO records from my DX4WIN log in initially populating DXKeeper to try it out. There were four epochs in my DX4WIN log. One was my old callsign before I moved to North Carolina. The second was my old callsign used in my first domicile in North Carolina,

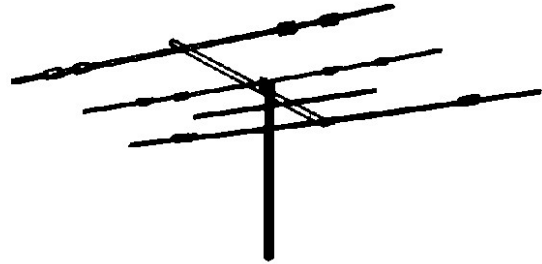
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and the third was when I got my vanity callsign while at the same address. Finally, I moved to a new home in 2013. I was able to filter each of these epochs into a group and apply the correct station callsign and QTH enmasse to each group so the log reflected the correct callsign and QTH for QSOs for each epoch. My DX4WIN log does not have fields for QTH or Station Callsign from where my end of the contact originated, so I cannot differentiate records in this way with that log.

There is a user group for DX Labs Suite from which an answer to any question is likely to be provided. DX Lab Suite's author, Dave Bernstein, watches the group and you are as likely to get an answer from Dave as from another group member. The update feature included in

the Launcher makes keeping your software up to date a painless task—and it is FAST for both software and database updates. If you want a full functioned logger that is also FREEWARE, you won't go wrong with DX Labs Suite. Plus, you can ask Dick Williams or John Scott for some personal help if you get stuck!



## What's Inside. . . .

**Carolina QSO Party** will include BOTH North and South Carolina. It's coming up on February 24-25. See Page 1.

Details of the **ARRL International DX Contest** are on Page 2. Check out the tighter log submission requirements.

Speaking of **CONTESTS**, your editor gives you a rundown on why you might want to operate in that next contest. Page 3.

**DX King for 2018** is off to a fast start. Say what? **Harvard's President is a ham. Bill Fisher takes home some hardware.** All on Page 5.

Who are our **newest members**? Page 6 will answer that.

Guess who is **climbing the DXCC ladder**? See Page 6.

The **Roving Reporter** visits **Lary Knain, W6NWS**. Story starts on Page 6

The **FT8 Challenge** starts off with a **BANG**. Digital goes viral. See page 7.

Looking for a full function logging program that is free? **DX Labs Suite** may be your answer. Page 9