

December 1994

# Carolina DX Association

## The Pileup

*Newsletter of the CDXA*

WD4R	Joe Simpkins	President
K2SD	Scott Douglass	Vice-President
W4UNP	Bill Jennings	Secretary-Treasurer
WZ3Q	Don Daso	Editor
AG4L	Bruce Gragg	Net Manager

### The President's Column

Welcome to our December issue. Holiday greetings to one & all! I'm looking forward to our Christmas Party on the 16th. We'll have fun visiting & "railroading" (oops, electing) another bunch of officers for the coming year.

We're in the process of making more CDXA PacketCluster Manuals available. Some of you have yet to see one of these beauties; others have squirreled an extra copy or two away someplace safe. It is always a good idea to have the Manual right next to your packet setup. It helps to refresh your memory & make the Cluster work better for you. We're trying very hard to have a limited number of manuals available at the Christmas Party. Please let those who have never seen this manual have first pick.

#### PACKETCLUSTER TIPS OF THE MONTH

If things seem slow, don't input your request a second time. This only backs up the system. A good solution then is to hard disconnect your TNC with Command: D. Later, try a new connection to the Cluster. We hope you won't experience as many delays now that we are incorporating new equipment & software.

Use the FILTER entries to save you being bothered with spots you don't want to see. Check your manual on how to do that. You'll find it under the COMMANDS section--under SET/FILTER portion.

Everyone should check their TNC manual for what is called a "watch dog timer" or something to that effect. Everyone's TNC should have this feature active. This sets a time limit for your TNC to stay in the continuous transmitting state, after which it releases the transmit signal to the radio. It will stay in this condition as long as the transmit signal from your computer or dumb terminal is there--computer lockup. Once the computer lockup is cleared & the computer stops sending a keying signal to the TNC, then it automatically releases & returns to normal operation.

If you have a latching power strip, please make sure your packet radio (or it's power supply) is plugged into it. A latching power strip opens when there is a lapse in the power company's continuous flow of power. The point is if you're having any interruption in your power service, you don't want your packet station on the air unmonitored.

Coming soon is a CDXA *Supplement to the PacketCluster Manual*. It will contain lots of info on the whys & wherefores of the system. Roger is authoring this *Supplement* with help from other folks.

A special THANKS to out-going *PILEUP* editor WZ3Q for a great job this year! Thanks also to the other CDXA officers for their dedication & work throughout the year. The CDXA is made up of a truly great bunch of folks. Merry Christmas & Happy New Year in 1995.

73 de Joe WD4R

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**7:00 PM Friday 16 DECEMBER 1994**  
**CDXA CHRISTMAS SOCIAL**

Ole Smokehouse Dining Room 1513 Montford Drive Charlotte NC  
*Annual Election of CDXA Officers*

CDXA DX Information NET (will return when .36 is fixed)  
Wednesday evening 8:30 PM 147.36 repeater

## EDITORIAL

December is a time for traditions, & ham radio is no different. Many of us have much to be thankful for, to appreciate, to contemplate & evaluate as we look forward to the new year. This sometimes manifests itself as a "resolution," which we joke about at work, but can lie awake about nights, worrying. I've recently spent some time thinking, sometimes worrying--about this club, the Newsletter, & other, larger questions about my ham radio life.

This will be my last *Pileup*. As I said when I began, I had hopes to move CDXA into somewhat larger, more visible roles in certain areas. With a membership base as large as ours, comprised of such talented DXers with so many accomplishments, with our large, existing PacketCluster system, I believed (indeed, still do) this club could move into more active, more visible roles. Like contesting. Like building a name & reputation for ourselves. Like doing things, whether it's having more meetings or classes (where will future DXers come from?) or Field Day or club contests or actually participating in contests--whatever. I just wanted, well, *more* of everything. I wanted CDXA to be more like the PVRC, I guess. This isn't such a radical idea. After all, when you look at the history of the CDXA, you'll see the concept is not too far from the founding fathers' intention. But I digress, the Potomac Valley Radio Club is up North, I've seen the bumper sticker, it's the 90s & here we are. I do keep coming back to the idea we're part of the greatest hobby in the world, & DXers are the international ambassadors & sportsmen of that group & we really should, as a club, be more organized. Shouldn't we...?

Creating this newsletter has been a labor of love, as it always is. It's been fun, sometimes. It's been rewarding, sometimes. People did compliment my efforts, sometimes. W4FHI sent me a postcard nearly every month, telling me what he liked & disliked. Several people refused to answer even my simplest query. (FYI...14 people failed in any way shape or form to respond to direct letters or queries regarding profile data. The entire club failed to respond to the DX survey, to the request for Heathkit stories, & to my solicitation on what *The Pileup* should be. There were, of course, a few exceptions, but two or three responses do not a newsletter make....) I did get an occasional piece of hate mail taking me to task. Those were hard to take, especially when they dealt with grammar or semantics. I have tried to make this newsletter something more than the typical "club newsletter," which is usually replete with mis-aligned type, misspellings & a different look each issue. I've enjoyed the actual editing process itself, in many ways; I like putting things together. But mostly it's been like hitting my head against a wall. I'm a stubborn individual; it's taken me 12 whole months to realize the CDXA really doesn't care about such things. So, it's time to let someone whose finger *is* on the pulse of the club take over. Maybe CDXA doesn't really want or need a newsletter. These are all issues which should be decided--perhaps at the dinner meeting on the 16th--before the election.

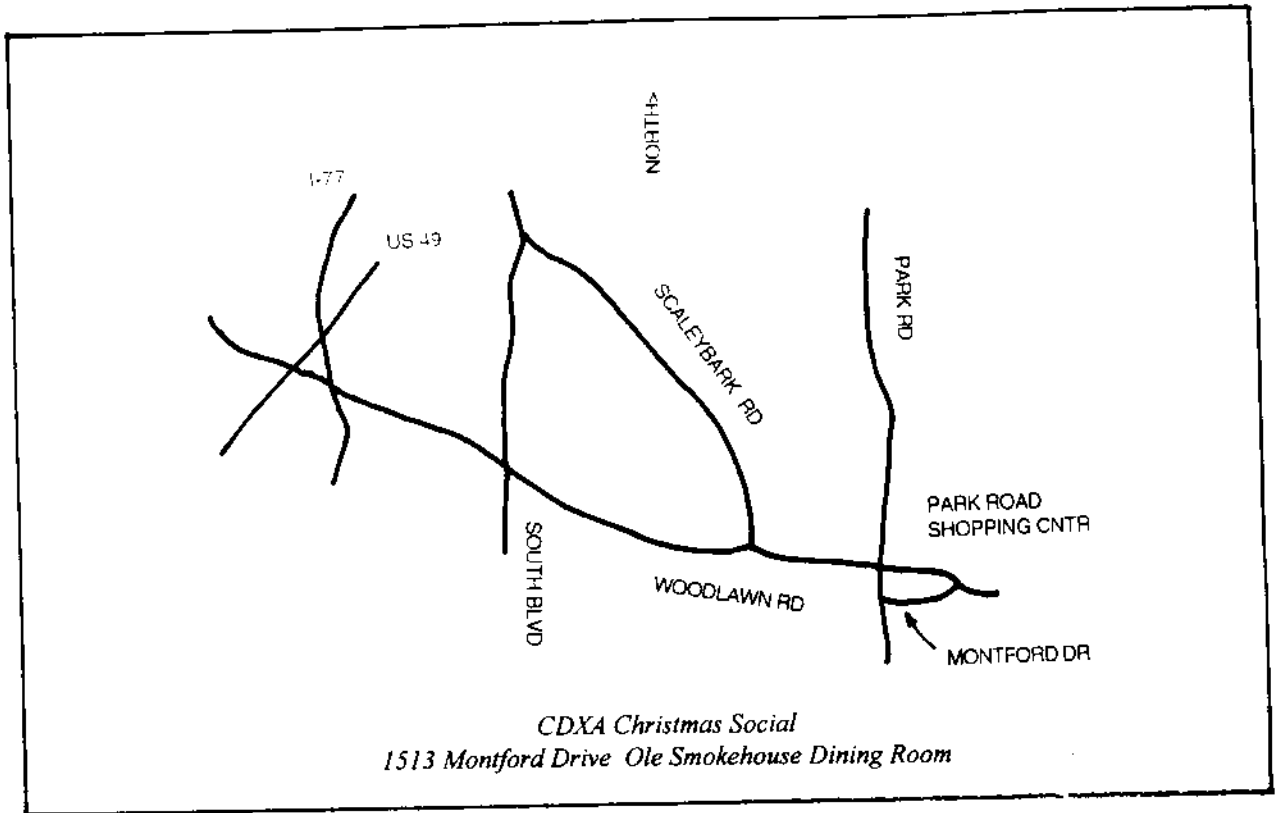
Money, of course, is another object. It's expensive to reproduce nearly 200 issues of a 4-6 page newsletter each month. To say nothing of the nearly \$50 in postage each issue then requires. Can we afford the expense? Last year, it looked like we could. Now, faced with serious expenses for our PacketCluster system, maybe we can't. Again, these are serious questions.

So, my resolution turns out to be pretty simple. Stop hitting my head against this wall. Finding a talented individual to edit the newsletter shouldn't be hard. There are many retired, technically qualified members on the CDXA roster. Maybe *you'd* like to volunteer...? Contact WA4UNZ (Ken heads up the nominating committee) before the 16th. It's just that simple.

I plan to continue being an active member, albeit from way up in Wilkesboro. I plan on continuing to try to establish us as a contesting presence here in the South--from N4ZC. I look forward to 1995. It's going to be a good year. If we only had some sunspots....

—WZ3Q

# The Back Page



## BOOK REVIEW

While searching for something in the Focal Press catalog, I came across this interesting title: *Masts, Antennas, & Service Planning*. (Focal Press does terrific work publishing excellent material within the film & photographic arts areas). Focal Press often re-prints English publications, & this title also proved British in origin. With a \$125 price tag, I assumed no ham would rush right out to buy a copy. But being one of those inveterate antenna builder types, I did rush right down & order myself a copy through the inter-library loan services of my local lending library. The computer found me a copy at the University of Miami. For 90-cents in postage, I was reading the book nine days later.

Fully three-quarters of the book is devoted to planning installations--from propagation studies, modulation systems, DBS systems, area coverage planning, site testing, antenna choices from LF through SHF--all of it focused on the commercial world. There's a lot of math & physics. The last 60 pages deal with support structures. And there's a lot of math & physics here, too, but it's worth wading through. For instance: have you ever looked at a commercial tower's bracing system? Or compared, say, AB-105 to something simple, like Rohn 25? And wondered exactly what the differences in structure meant--mechanically? This book gives you comparisons (with the math) on the various bracing systems used in modern tower design. Analysis are given for such systems as: X-braced, Z-braced, tension braced, single warren bracing, multiple lattice bracing, K-bracing, & so on. Safety factors, stays (guys here in W-K land), base details, foundations, erection methods, all get discussed in some detail. You almost feel like (having put up your 50-foot of Rohn 25 the other Saturday) you could move on to the bigger stuff. Armed with the data in this book, a modern computer, & the requisite math knowledge, you probably could engineer something safe. Rigging it's another matter. The book's worth a look. I'm glad I read it. And I copied the bibliography.

—WZ3Q