The Pileup

W4DXA

April 1999

Newsletter of the CDXA

N4PQX	Bob Burton	President
W4WN	Cliff Wagoner	Vice-President
K4MQG	Gary Dixon	Sec.-Treasurer
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CDXA Packet Cluster & other communications systems

W4DXA	Young Mountain, NC	144.93 (1200 baud) & 441.00 (1200/9600 baud)
K4MD	Charlotte, NC	144.91 (1200 baud) & 441.075 (1200/9600 baud)
DXWIN	Digi-peater near Wingate, NC	144.91
repeater 147.18 (+600) near Fort Mill, SC		
homepage: www.cdxa.org		

The Pileup is published 10 times a year; there are no issues in June or December.

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I hope everyone had a great time at the Charlotte Hamfest. For those of you who couldn't make it, you missed a wonderful event. There was a combination DX/Contest Forum, with Wayne Mills, N7NG, giving a keynote talk about the H40AA DXpedition, and our own editor, Don, K4ZA, talking about his CQWW effort as PJ8Z. There was also a very informative presentation on the new DXCC 2000 program by Wayne, N7NG, and Roanoke Director, John Kanode, N4MM. The CDXA booth was quite active as well, with two main attractions. Our slide show of member's stations stopped traffic, as usual. Thanks to all who submitted slides. The other big draw was the raffle item, a Brookstone tool set. Congratulations to the winner, Dave, N4XO. The raffle was a success, generating $186 for the club. Our Saturday night reception at the Steak & Ale was also a hit. Changing locations for this event saved the club nearly $700 compared to last year. We hope to expand to a dinner-oriented reception next year. Again, thanks to all who helped contribute to the CDXA's Hamfest success.

For some of you, this may be your last issue of *The Pileup*. Check your address label. If your name and callsign are colored or highlighted, then your CDXA dues are past due. Please send your dues to Gary, K4MQG. Next month, we'll publish the yearly CDXA roster and all 1999 CDXA members will receive a printed copy of *The Pileup*.

In PacketCluster news, we're making some changes. We continue to have problems running both 1200 and 9600 baud simultaneously on the 440 MHz frequencies. So, we've decided to make the W4DXA node (441.000) and K4MD node (441.075) support only 9600 baud connections. This change should improve reliability of the PacketCluster system. If this change will adversely affect anyone, please contact Joe, K4MD, to discuss possible alternatives. Support for 1200 baud connections will continue on the 2M frequencies. We're also looking at other new possibilities, such as connecting to the Internet PacketCluster. Sysops are talking about this idea right now, so, if you have any thoughts on this plan, please contact me, any of the officers, or Joe, K4MD. We need input as we're looking to improve our PacketCluster.

We've also been discussing some ideas for a future CDXA meeting/program. If you have suggestions for a program or meeting you'd like to see, please contact Cliff, W4WN. We hope to have some plans to announce in the next *Pileup*.

If you participated in the ARRL International DX contest or the CQWW WPX contests, don't forget to send your scores to W4WN for inclusion in *The Pileup*. I hope everyone who participated enjoyed them, and worked some choice DX!

In radio news, there's been lots of good DX on the bands. Malpelo Island was active with HK3JJH/0M, and St. Peter and St. Paul Rocks were active as ZV0SB and ZV0SW. Both of these are pretty high on the most-wanted list. Also noteworthy were the operations by T30R and T33RD, who made many low band DXers very happy. As I write this, the Rodriguez Island DXpedition has begun as 3B9R. I hope everyone makes it into the logs. See you in the pileups

73 Bob N4PQX

EDITORIAL

What's in a name? Shakespeare, for one, claimed that a rose by any other name smells just as sweet. There's plenty of evidence he was wrong, just this once. Clairol's "MIST STICK" curling iron wasn't a big hit in Germany, since apparently mist is slang for manure in German. Chevrolet's "NOVA" wasn't a big hit in Spanish-speaking lands, as nova translates into *it does not go* in Spanish.

Obviously, the simple question *What's in a name?* has one simple answer—everything. The name of our club, Carolina DX Association, can be a case in point. We have some distant members (folks who've moved out of the area, for instance; others who simply know members here and have no local DX club to join), but the vast majority of our membership resides in North and South Carolina. The majority of these members reside in or near Mecklenburg County—near Charlotte.

Traditionally, this club has been loosely organized over the years. We've never had regular meetings, unless you count the on-the-air net meetings we used to have back in the early and mid-80s. The weekly luncheons at Shoney's in Charlotte remain informal, so I'm not counting these as meetings. The newsletter has sometimes been sporadic. Indeed, it's even disappeared on occasion.

I bring this up because I was reminded of it recently, by a distant member's criticisms, which were intense. Indeed, the vehemence and tone of his note to me shocked me. Much of his criticism was directed at me personally, which I won't address here, adding further fuel to the metaphorical fire. It suffices to say I do not believe I've destroyed the club, which was his claim. But perhaps the club has eroded some of its own effectiveness, by the very nature of its lack of structure.

What are we doing, for instance, for distant members? Are we making them feel a part of the organization? Probably not. But, then, we're not really doing anything FOR the local members, besides running the PacketCluster and publishing a newsletter and running a web-site. When YOU show up at Shoney's, are you really helping the club? I don't think so. You're there to see and talk with your friends, grab a sandwich, and so forth. Not much goes beyond that dining room. That luncheon won't affect a member in Albemarle, Boone, or Columbia...well, you get the idea.

What ARE our options? Unlimited, yet, without some form of change, severely so. In other words, we have a great opportunity before us. It's an opportunity that's been mentioned before in these editorials, by past officers, by other members, and by me. It's the potential for greatness, the possibility for improvement, as well as the chance to succeed where other clubs have failed. (Indeed, the other local NC/SC clubs haven't even tried.) What am I speaking of? A larger, more-involved membership, for one. More activities, for another. More fun for one-and-all, for another.

I believe the potential exists among the members we have to be a great club. I believe we have an almost unlimited pool of knowledge, experience, and resources. It takes only the smallest effort on the part of each member. For instance, let's consider our booth at the Charlotte Hamfest. It's a traditional gathering place for members each Hamfest. We have a slideshow which never fails to attract attention, helping us sell raffle tickets, as well as showing off a bit, if you will. One person sent in pictures of his station. One.

Granted, Bob, N4PQX went out and took pictures on his own and we used them. But, really, should this sort of effort be necessary? The booth was manned by essentially four people the entire weekend. Granted, no appeals were made for help. But, again, should this be necessary? The idea that you get out of something what you put into it isn't that foreign a concept to this club. At least it shouldn't be.

But, I digress, maybe this is how ham radio ends—quietly, not with a bang, but a whimper. Maybe these *are* the final days of what once was a going group...and perhaps I am partly to blame,

thinking that the best was yet to be, looking forward instead of backward, and so on and so on and so on.

--K4ZA

TRAVELS IN TENNESSEE

On a recent trip to Knoxville, TN, I had occasion to glance at a road map—noticing that Sevierville, TN wasn't that far off the I-40 route we were taking. I've heard (both on-air and in-person) accounts over the years of hams taking a tour of the Ten-Tec facility. Since time was available, it seemed like a good idea.

Marti and I arrived during lunch hour, but Scott Robbins, W4PA, the amateur radio product manager, made us feel right at home, and agreed to give us a private tour. (Normally, tours are scheduled once in the morning and once in the afternoon.) In fact, he even recognized my callsign as being an active contester, which made me feel especially welcome.

If you don't know, Ten-Tec (an abbreviated version of Tennessee Technology) is the last surviving manufacturer of ham gear (full-blown equipment, that is) in the USA. Founding father Al Kahn, K4FW, is a well-respected electronics industry leader (the Electro-Voice factory is right across the street, which is what drew Al to Tennessee from Michigan originally, building that plant in the 70s), and a well-known DXer. Ten-Tec gear has its devoted fans and followers, along with the usual nay-sayers who think anything not made in the Far East by giant conglomerates can be competitive. (I've owned several pieces of T-T gear, and truthfully, I don't think there's any finer gear made for the serious CW operator. More on spinning the dial on the Omni VI later...)

Scott took us through the rest of the plant. The breakdown of Ten-Tec's market goes like this: about 40% ham gear; 40% military and commercial gear; and 20% metal-working products— like aluminum cabinets for our own K4SQR's products. Overall, their business is more seasonal than I expected.

As we were walking around, I was making mental comparisons to other, similar factories I've been in throughout my film/video career (believe me, it's a higher-than-you-might-expect number). I was struck by little touches throughout the tour, things which, while small, make technology easier to implement, or save time, or otherwise increase production efficiencies. In each case, these are mainly "homebrew" solutions— like covers on the automated assembly line which fold down, creating instant workbench space when the line's not in use. Throughout the plant, there was plenty of evidence of "just in time" ordering and delivery. Ten-Tec is well-known for making everything that goes into making a radio—like making their own knobs, transformers, and cabinets for instance. Whenever possible, they try to use American-made components. The "burn in" testing area and repair facilities were both simple, but impressive.

I was pleased to read the announcement flyer for the new Titan II amplifier. And I was impressed with the sound and feel of the Omni VI that I got to play with in their hamshack. (I realized, sitting there, what a great idea this is—every factory/plant/manufacturing facility should have an on-site hamshack, regardless of business! There's nothing like a few minutes of CW copying to get one's mind of the troubles and cares of the day. Tell your boss you need something like this—consider it day care for the workers.) Scott showed me some pictures of his station, complete with a Big Bertha pole in the backyard (It's the former Knoxville home of founder K4FW, who's since retired back to Michigan). Scott has managed some competitive scores from there.

Overall, it was a worthwhile hour and a half (I'd figured we'd spend about 30 minutes there). I can easily recommend touring Ten-Tec if you find yourself nearby anytime soon.

--K4ZA

TAKE YOUR KID TO WORK DAY...KINDA, SORTA...IN A HAM RADIO SENSE OF THINGS

Amateur Radio is more than just a hobby—it's a fraternity of people throughout the world who are always willing to help each other. I got into the hobby through a family friend; I was 15 years old and he was about 20. He used to take me to our computer club meetings since I couldn't drive yet. He had this handheld radio he'd talk to his friends on while we drove to the meeting. I didn't think much of it; at 15, I was more interested in going to the club meeting to see all the new games and cool computer stuff. (By the way, this club was for Radio Shack Color Computers...boy, am I getting old!) One day after one of the computer club meetings, we were invited to one of the member's home. He was also a ham, but I didn't care about that, I wanted to see his computers. But when I got there, I was blown away by his antennas, radios, awards, and QSLs. I only knew the hobby as a handheld radio you used to talk to people within a 50-100 mile radius. So, I started to ask questions: what's this, what's that, did you really talk to a guy on Christmas Island? By the way, where *is* Christmas Island? And this guy was great; he let me sit there for three hours asking questions, listening to different bands, with him making QSOs on RTTY, CW and PHONE. I couldn't believe it—*he was talking to someone in Spain.*

I knew then this was a hobby I wanted to get into. *What do I have to do to be able to talk to these people?* This was around the time Technicians were allowed phone privileges on 10 meters. His first statement was "How do you want to communicate?" I didn't understand it then, but I do now—he wanted me to learn the Morse code. He gave me a bunch of information, a schematic of how to build a keyer from parts at Radio Shack costing less than $5. So, away I went, getting my novice ticket (KA1NIP), which gave me privileges on 220 MHz. I was on the air talking to people in the Southington Amateur Radio Society. I turned 17 and was very involved in the club. I upgraded to Tech and I built my first tower, 40-feet attached to my parent's house with two 2 Meter Boomers stacked and a K1FO 440 antenna for ATV and 440 ssb. I was doing great chasing grid squares.

At about 18, I got involved with the wrong kind of people and I was quickly going down the wrong path in life. My parents and family were worried; they didn't know what was going to happen next. I wasn't involved in radio anymore; I'd sold all my equipment. All I had left was a 220 HT no one wanted to buy. I didn't go to college because I didn't think it was important. I was working in construction and I wasn't going anywhere in life.

One cold, winter day in Connecticut, I was about 40 feet in the air framing a house when *WHAM!* my finger and hammer got in a fight and my finger lost. I had to have reconstructive surgery to put it back on and plastic surgery to have it look like a finger again. When I couldn't work, and with no one around all day, I got so sick of feeling sorry for myself and watching TV that I picked up the 220 radio and put my call out on the repeater. Well, a couple of the club members came back and asked where I'd been, and what was I doing with my life.

They talked me into coming to the next meeting. Once there, I met two guys who were in the computer industry. One worked for The Hartford Insurance Company and the other for Travelers. I spent about a month talking to them while I was going through therapy on my hand. Both had me over to their homes to watch them contesting and chasing DX. I loved it. I had to do it! I wanted to chase DX once I saw it and contesting sounded like great fun. I knew I wouldn't win based on some of the super stations out there, but I would set a goal and go for it. The best thing these two guys did was talk me into going back to school and getting into the computer industry. How could I argue—they'd picked me up when I was down and helped me get back on my feet. So I did exactly that!

I got my first computer job at 19 after technical school. The story, as many of you know, becomes successful after that—I'm now 29, working for Microsoft, with about 17 people who work for me. I upgraded to Advanced (KD1LR); I hope to reach Extra soon. I just bought a new Yaesu 1000MP and I have a G5RV about six feet in the air (don't ask about my vertical). I've worked 46 states and 51 countries since I got the radio in January. Now, you're probably asking yourself: why'd Nick lay out his life story for all of us to read? Some of you may even be saying, "Who cares?" Well, here's why: without ham radio, without the people I met because of it, my life would be dramatically different. I'm not saying ham radio can or will change everyone's life, but we do have the ability to open the eyes of others who are already hams. Let's show them some other sides of the hobby. Let's show them there's more than simply talking on the repeater, for instance.

Do you really want the hobby to grow? Do you want the CDXA to grow and expand? Would you like the club to be a leader in DX and contesting throughout the South? Well, we're going to consistently need new blood, people with a passion about the hobby who are willing to help others upgrade and learn. Since I've been a member (for only two months), you guys have been GREAT to me. You've accepted me, offered me coax, antennas and other needs to get me on the air and working DX. To me, *this* is what the hobby's all about, plain and simple.

There are 1,503 novices, 5,308 Technicians and 3,471 Tech-Pluses in the State of North Carolina. There are 425 novices, 1,789 Technicians and 1,326 Tech-Pluses in the State of South Carolina. With numbers like these, I'm sure we could find people who'd love to see our shacks or stop by for a few hours some weekend to see what DXing/Contesting is all about. (Heck, I'd love to see a station like N4ZC's myself.) I'm sure we could easily get a majority of these people motivated to upgrade, and become more involved in the hobby and in our DX club. Just think back to my story—without a radio club and people interested in helping others, I wouldn't be where I am today. I'm willing to do whatever it takes to make CDXA a success. I'd like to help other hams see what we're about and how much fun we have doing what we do. That's the way to grow the hobby and CDXA. Think about it!

--KD1LR

Nick's obviously serious about what he writes about here—he's agreed to take on the Webmaster duties of our CDXA home page. Anthony's duties at Corporate Media Services simply no longer allow him sufficient time to devote to the site. We thank him for his efforts in getting us started on the web, and we'd like to welcome Nick not only into the CDXA ranks, but thank him for what we're sure will become an even greater presence on the World Wide Web.

ARRL DX CW from HC8N

I've always been fascinated by stories of the wildlife on the Galapagos Islands. Both my XYL Charlanne and I are nature lovers and we were looking for another adventure we would both enjoy. In December, I exchanged e-mails with Trey, N5KO, asking him if he'd ever do any multiop contests from HC8N, which he frequently visited. He replied we could do ARRL DX CW, as he'd already be there with Steve, K6AW, for the RTTY contest the week before. Trey gave us the names of a couple of Galapagos cruise operators—the only practical way to see the wildlife on the uninhabited islands of the group. We cashed in some frequent flier miles, made hotel reservations for Quito and bought our cruise tickets.

We arrived in Quito after a somewhat nervous flight (American Airlines went on strike at the beginning of our trip) and were met by Pedro, HC1OT, who took us to a nearby hotel. The next morning, we boarded our flight to HC8 and were met by Trey and Steve, as well as the cruise people at the San Cristobal airport. After handing a box of Beverage materials to Trey, we were off on our five-day cruise of the islands. If you've never visited HC8, it's the experience of a lifetime! The birds and animals are so tame you literally have to watch you don't step on them. Boobies (red footed, blue footed, and masked), sea lions, iguanas, giant tortoises, sea turtles, and penguins (at the Equator!) are just a few of the really unusual creatures you'll see.

The radio part of our trip began after the cruise. We first saw the radio site (about 18 km from town where we were staying at HC8GR's house), which is located on a high (>2000-ft) plateau with the sea visible for almost 270 degrees and about four-miles away. Trey and several other guys from the West Coast are building a station and house there. The house has 3 floors, the top

one dedicated to radio with big picture windows and operating tables around the exterior walls. It's still under construction, with the carpenters living on the bottom floor. (They sometimes caused us QRM installing window frames on the top floor while we were trying to do a little operating before the contest.)

When I arrived, there were four towers supporting monobanders for 40-10M, but nothing on 80 or 160. A Cushcraft 402CD was visible for miles at the top of the 140-ft homebrew tower, so we had an excellent support from which to string wires for the low bands. We decided to put up a elevated ground plane for 160 from the top of the tower sloping toward the north with four elevated radials about 10-ft high. After getting it up and resonate at 1830, I got on the air briefly at sunset and worked a bunch of US stations. Atmospheric QRN was fairly bad and I knew we would need to get Beverages up to help pull out the weaker stations, but at least the transmit antenna was working well!

The next day I went back up the tower and strung an inverted-Vee for 80 from the top. Steve and Trey pulled the ends out; we adjusted resonance for 3525. (By the way, the homemade tower was constructed like Rohn 45, but using rebar for the Z-bars. My guess is it's actually stronger than 45, but it looks somewhat like a snake when viewed from the bottom!)

The next step was to put up two Beverages—one to the North for the contest, and one to the Northeast for Europe (for some fun and future contests). After some sunburn and scratches from hacking through the mora briars (wild raspberries), a 600-footer for North America and a 1000-footer for Europe were up. That night, I verified they were directive and seemed to be working well. On Topband, 5B4ADA peaked S8 on the unpreamplified EU Beverage! We had massive European pileups on 80, working deep into European Russia. We were now ready for the contest!

Since we were entering the contest in the Multiop-Two Transmitter category, each of us would have 32 hours of operating time during the 48-hour contest. I proposed an eight-hours-ON, four-hours-OFF schedule, staggered every four hours. This would give each of us plenty of operating time and a reasonable amount of sleep. Our operating positions were using a FT-1000MP and FT-990 radios, driving two AL-1200 amplifiers to ~1000 watts output. We wanted to run things conservatively for reliability reasons. Our call and location would provide plenty of gain beyond what the amplifiers delivered!

I operated mostly 20/80/160 from 0400-1200 UTC, and 10 meters from 1600-2400 on both days. I had an absolute ball on the low bands, as well as 10 meters, which was incredible at times! The only real problem we had was QRM from DX stations calling us. The Beverage really worked well on 80 and 160 and I was pleased our numbers beat stations much closer to the USA. Ten meters was a real advantage for us, since we had better and longer coverage to the USA than stations that were closer. Our final score was 8294 QSO's with 350 states/provinces for a total score of >8.7 Million points. This was ~9% over the previous worldwide record for the Multi-Two category set by 6D2X in 1994.

What a blast! This was my first contest from the other side and I'm already looking forward to another one!

--W4ZV

	HC8N	V26O	6D2X
160	454/54	407/51	454/54 (QSOs/Multipliers)
80	868/58	716/57	729/59
40	1275/59	1468/58	1636/60
20	1633/59	1491/59	1403/58
15	1983/60	1825/60	1679/59
10	2081/60	1760/60	1035/56
Total	8294/350	7667/345	6936/346
Score	8,708,700	7,935,345	7,193,340

Quick & Easy Y2K check for your PC

Go to: <www/nstl.com>

Download YMARK2000, putting the software into a temp file (<c:\temp\Y2000.exe> which should only take a few minutes).

Then reboot your computer to DOS (if you're running Windows 95, simply shutdown & click on "restart the computer in MS-DOS mode").

Y2000.exe produces two files: 2000.exe & README.txt and you want to execute the Y2000.exe file by typing the path to the file, followed by the file name, For instance, at the c-prompt, you'd type: <c: \temp\Y2000.exe>

Then execute the test program by typing <2000.exe> at the DOS prompt

And the test results will be displayed on your monitor screen.

YMARK2000 performs the following tests:

* The test ensures that the date & time indices are compatible to the Motorola MC146818 chip & that the data is packed in BCD (binary coded decimal) format

* It verifies real-time progression from December 31, 1999 to January 1, 2000. If real time support fails, then the ability to set the date manually is checked

* It verifies recognition & support of leap years from 2000 through 2009

If an error is indicated, you may return to the NSTL website for explanation.

And, just in case you had NOT thought about it—is your VCR ready for the year 2000? That flashing time on your VCR tells you there's a computer chip inside, which needs to be Y2K compatible. But don't toss the old unit out just yet. Setting the date to 1972 will still allow you to record *Ally McBeal* or *NOVA* because the days will be the same....

--W4VHF

THE BACK PAGE

WEB WANDERINGS

**http://www.dx-central.com
A new DX-oriented website with some interesting search capabilities.**

**http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/wd4ngb/call.htm
Try this URL for all your call sign look up needs.**

**http://paradox2010.com/ham/cluster.htm
An interesting site of telnet cluster addresses.**

**http://www.bama.sbc.edu
Just in case any of you out there are looking for "boat anchor" schematics.**

A few months ago, the DX Reflector ran hot and heavy with discussions on Packet and lists. As usual, I deleted most everything immediately. However, I thought WC1M's commentary was particularly well said. I've been saving it to use in some special Pileup. It seems especially appropriate here, with its historical perspective.

Sometimes I miss the "good old days," before PacketCluster, when to work DX you had to tune around and find it. That was particularly challenging here in rural western NH because there weren't enough local DXers to have an effective 2M-spotting network. I used to spend many happy hours in front of my radio, listening, listening, listening. It was hard work but fun, and the listening was great training for succeeding in pileups (contrary to popular belief, you work more countries by listening than by transmitting). There's nothing like the thrill of stumbling across a rare DX station just starting to call CQ. That happened to me many times, perhaps the most memorable of which was a BY station back when China was still #1 on the most-wanted list. That almost never happens today if you depend exclusively on the cluster for DX spots.

On the other hand, the pace of my life today is such that if tuning around were still necessary, I wouldn't be working any DX at all. Family and work obligations mean I don't have that much time to spend on ham radio. It's hard enough to get time to work the really rare stuff that I still need, spend an occasional weekend working a big contest, and build a project or two. I feel lucky that I was able to learn to tune and listen back when I had the time to do it. I'm also grateful to the PacketCluster for keeping me in the game and helping me to work dozens of rare DX stations. Yeah, it's a boost when they tell you where the DX is listening or where they just worked a station, but I still get a good mental workout determining just where and when to call and finding ways to succeed in spite of the worsening QRM problem ... It's probably true that the advantage of the cluster is offset by the disadvantage of the increased competition and QRM.

The cluster and lists are compromises some of us have to live with... There's something to be said for the camaraderie of a group effort. Some people like to travel alone, others like company. Each person must define his or her own criteria for success...and should not judge the criteria others set for themselves.

--WC1M

HISTORY PROVIDES FUN, HILARITY, AND HUMBLING EXPERIENCES

In 1913, Lee de Forest, inventor of the audion tube, to whom we owe some small debt of gratitude, was brought to trial on charges of fraud. He'd used the mail to sell the public stock in his Radio Telephone Company. Considered a worthless enterprise, the District Attorney charged: *De Forest has said in many newspapers and over his signature that it would be possible to transmit human voices across the Atlantic before many years. Based on these absurd and deliberately misleading statements, the misguided public...has been persuaded to purchase stock in his company...*

De Forest was acquitted, but the judge advised him "to get a common garden variety of job and stick to it." Today, of course, no one remembers the judge or the District Attorney! (*History of Radio* . New York, American Historical Society, 1938, p. 110) Interestingly enough, W. W. Dean, President of the Dean Telephone Company, had already told Lee de Forest in 1907: *You could put in this room [his office], de Forest, all the radiotelephone apparatus the country will ever need! (Father of Radio, the Autobiography of Lee de Forest.* Chicago, Wilcox & Follett Co., 1950. p. 232)

Pileup Home