



May 1999

The Pileup

Newsletter of the CDXA

Carolina DX Association

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W4WN Cliff Wagoner Vice-President
K4MQG Gary Dixon Secretary-Treasurer
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CDXA PacketCluster & other communications systems			
W4DXA Young Mountain	144.93	(1200 baud) & 441.00	(9600 baud)
K4MD Charlotte, NC	144.91	(1200 baud) & 441.075	(9600 baud)
digi-peater near Wingate, NC		DXWIN	144.91
repeater 147.18 (+600) near Fort Mill, SC			
homepage	< www.cdxa.org >		

PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS

Another month has passed and so has another major DXpedition. 3B9R from Rodrigues Island made many happy (including myself). I hope you made the log as well. They definitely made the local ham happy, as 3B9FR is now back on the air after losing most everything to an earlier typhoon.

If you've been on the bands lately, you know propagation hasn't been so great, especially considering the new cycle and the promise the previous months had shown. But the flux numbers are rising again and the bands are improving. Lately, FR5ZU/T's solo efforts have made many DXers happy, especially his nightly appearances on 75M. Currently, a group of JAs is on T2, and each operator has his own call, so make sure you know which one you're working.

Last month, new-member Nick Palomba, KD1LR, took over as CDXA webmaster. Anthony Proctor, our former HTML-creator, became increasingly busy at work, so the torch has now been passed to Nick. Many thanks to Anthony for his efforts on CDXA's behalf. Nick will be working hard to update the website, including looking into problems some members have had accessing the site. If anyone has suggestions for improving our website, please let K4ZA know! And, please bring any problems to our attention. This month, all 1999 CDXA members are receiving a hard copy of *The Pileup*, which includes our annual roster. Please let us know of any needed corrections or changes.

We still want input from you concerning a CDXA meeting and/or program for this summer. We've had a few suggestions, one being a dinner followed by a program by Bill Tippet, W4ZV, on his operation in the Galapagos Islands. Another suggestion was mounting a CDXA Field Day effort, possibly over at Ron Bailey's QTH. (At one time, AA4S and a couple of CDXA ops held the 3E Field Day record, so it's not a bad location.) We want your input on these ideas or other suggestions of your own. Please contact your officers and let us know what you'd like to do. Don't forget the CQWW WPX CW, on May 29-30. If you participate, send your score to Cliff, W4WN. Also remember, there's no June edition of the newsletter, so you can catch up on your QSL chores.

73 Bob N4PQX

EDITORIAL

It's Sunday night as I'm typing away here, and Mulder and Scully are out there—searching for the truth. It's an entertaining concept—that something as grand and ethereal as “the truth” is, indeed, “out there,” capable of being discovered. It's an entertaining show, albeit not without its detractors. Non-believers, we'll simply call them. Or non-fans, at least.

After 36-plus years of hamming, here are some radio-related “truths.”

CW is fun. It's a viable and vibrant communications tool, as capable now as when it was first created.

Phone is all too easy. Which is only one reason why it's the dominant, or favorite mode, for most hams.

Chasing DX seriously will make you a better person, citizen, and ham. Think about it. It's even written there, in really fine print, at the bottom of your DXCC award.

QSL cards are as valuable as currency. I've seen N4ZC use them to light his wood stove. This is very Zen.

Ham radio needs some heroes—some colorful, larger-than-life types, in order to become more widely popular. Who can be the Goldberg or Earnhardt of this hobby? Where will the promoters for ham radio rise from—who will create a way to bring our world more into the public eye?

Who thought up the phrase, “shack on the belt” anyway? Odds are, it wasn't meant to be derogatory when first created. One problem with this phrase is how it turns hams against one another. Yet, like all cliches, it's true. All too true.

The longer you're active in anything, even life itself, the more you'll find yourself becoming interested in history. I find myself drawn back to “favorite” films more than ever recently—those films which enchanted me in film school. I find myself interested in the early days of radio. I frequently find myself thinking about Paul Segal's “The Amateur's Code,” printed up front in the Handbook for years and years. I even find I'm interested in reading and learning about collectors and QRP experimenters—folks on some fringe, if you will, of our hobby.

Hamfest attendance is said to be declining. It's generally believed to be related to the increasing age of the general ham population. The idea is basically that since everyone's getting older, and finding every moment of life more and more precious, walking around hamfests searching for bargains is entirely too mundane and boring. Mulder and Scully suspect over-zealous Collins Collectors at work.

Pileups around the bands seem to be getting larger. See previous “truth.” Conclusion: the old farts are obviously becoming DXers, using FT-1000MPs, Alphas, and monobanders on tall towers to work anything and everything that's spotted on the DX PacketCluster.

Weather forecasting and radio propagation forecasting have a lot in common. No one can say for sure what's going to happen. The best persevere, while the rest complain. DXers know this, intuitively.

Ham radio has its own non-believers. Naysayers and non-fans, who will tell you hard times are upon us, that the end is near, that theirs is the “truth” you need to hear and know. They're on 75M right now, promoting this idea. Lots of evidence exists to dispel this notion. The truth is out there.

Get into the spirit of hamming for the 90s. Make your own list.

--K4ZA

CAROLINA DX ASSOCIATION—1999

K1MJJ KD1LR W1WW	Wilson Caselli Nick Palomba George Felber	12104 Oakhaven Drive 15005 Cane Field Drive 1414 Farnstead Road	Charlotte NC 28273 Charlotte NC 28273 Rock Hill SC 29732	704-588-2944 704-583-4410 803-366-3556
K2SD K2XA K2Z1 N2BT N2HV	Scott Douglass Haney Howell Steve Sullivan William Thomas Jerry Malin	1591 Trojan Horse Circle 168 Greenbay Drive 2609 Dellinger Circle 652 Short Spoon Circle 3056 Scottsdale Lane	Fleetwood NC 28626 Rock Hill SC 29732 Charlotte NC 28269 Rocky Mount NC 27804 Matthews NC 28104	910-877-2461 803-324-5537 704-598-4934 919-442-6131 704-821-3838
AA4NN AA4R AA4S AA4SC AA4SQ AA4U AA4ZZ AD4HE AE4PB AK4N	Joe Blackwell Bill Parris Ron Bailey Ric Porter Charlie McSwain Skip Richardson Paul Trotter Paul Ponak Jerry Moore Grady Robinson	6391 Baker Lane 16741 100 Norman Place 420 Community Road 2897 Brookridge Drive 1713 Chesterfield Drive 6224 Glenridge Road 6801 Folger Drive 635 Crater Street 2385 Witley Road 902 Forest Drive	Lake Wylie SC 29710 Cornelius NC 28031 Shelby NC 28152 Rock Hill SC 29731 Belmont NC 28012 Charlotte NC 28211 Charlotte NC 28270 Charlotte NC 28205 Fort Mill SC 29715 Lancaster SC 29720	803-831-2547 704-892-4081 704-487-0337 803-817-9774 704-829-5653 704-364-4750 704-365-6367 704-332-1882 803-548-0058 803-283-8298
K4BVQ K4CFR K4DGJ K4DXA K4HJE K4IHN K4KL K4MD K4MQG K4NXS K4PC	Frank Dowd Henry Nasseeman Sam Hawes Ken Boyd Ed Hicks Kent Miller Rick Kourey Joe Simpkins Gary Dixon Theo Bellamy Chris Penick	623 Lester Davis Road 4583 Pendergosa Lane 308 Minden Lane 6733 Cedar Springs Road 1467 Spring Hill Circle 941 Ridge Road 4401 Asherton Drive 2400 Flintwood Lane 1606 Crescent Ridge PO Box 587 PO Box 1926	Waxhaw NC 28173 Concord NC 28025 Matthews NC 28105 Charlotte NC 28212 Kernersville NC 27284 Lexington NC 27295 Charlotte NC 28226 Charlotte NC 28226 Fort Mill SC 29715 Denver NC 28037 Boone NC 28607	704-843-5968 704-782-2245 000-000-0000 704-567-9733 910-996-5081 336-224-2943 704-541-1663 704-365-8492 803-547-7450 704-483-3704 828-264-7557

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K4SI	Bob Cranford	1369 Little Valley Lane	Lincolnton NC 28092	704-735-0903
K4SLC	Don Brannan	11502 Painted Tree Road	Charlotte NC 28226	704-542-2855
K4SQR	Jim Miller	11600 Hilda Court	Charlotte NC 28226	704-542-6162
K4VNY	Mac Murray	PO Box 3356	Topsail Beach NC 28445	910-328-1598
K4WAM	Bill McKay	617 Edgewater Drive	Belmont NC 28012	704-825-8094
K4ZA	Don Dasso	189 Timber Creek Drive	Stanley NC 28164	704-263-1134
K4ZO	Bruce Gragg	1544 Fox Dairy Road	Newton NC 28658	704-465-3715
KD4OM	Jim Morris	409 Jearl Ridge Road	Granite Falls NC 28630	000-000-0000
KD4RH	Gary Bader	712 Kelly Mill Road	Elgin SC 29045	803-419-0931
KF4NO	Robert Denton	5618 Cherrycrest Lane	Charlotte NC 28217	704-525-9297
KI4YV	Bob Southworth	775 Damascus Church Road	Hiddenite NC 28636	704-876-2757
KJ4DE	Pioneer ARC/DR	POB 30188 (13B32 BSC)	Charlotte NC 28230	000-000-0000
KK4JU	Robert Aycoth	5910 Rocky River Road South	Monroe NC 28112	704-764-7408
KN4CC	Sieve Freeman	831 Wringrave Drive	Charlotte NC 28270	000-000-0000
KN4FO	Larry Jones	10110 Pioneer Mill Road	Concord NC 28025	704-455-9650
KO4GU	Tim Creech	4632 Snow Drive	Harrisburg NC 28075	704-455-5729
KI4HIN	Thomas Wright	7114 Monroe Road	Charlotte NC 28212	704-536-3003
KI4IV	Wayne Starnes	700 Haindel Lane	Apex NC 27502	000-000-0000
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N4BY	Buddy Teague	2719 Old Paroue Road	Lancaster SC 29720	803-286-5299
N4JEV	Larry Ross	7148 Pitchfork Lane	Mint Hill NC 28227	704-545-0775
N4JI	Jack Jackson	PO Box 12612	Florence SC 29504	803-669-1416
N4JU	John Cannon	2985 Woodstream Drive	Valdese NC 28690	704-433-1720
N4LUF	Carlton Grainger	652 Kenwood Lane	Rock Hill SC 29730	803-329-0837
N4MM	John Kanode	1741 Old Chapel Road	Boyce VA 22620	540-837-1340
N4OU	Tripp Harris	11530 Laurel View Drive	Charlotte NC 28273	704-587-7430
N4PQX	Bob Burton	851 Brookbank Road	Charlotte NC 28209	704-522-0332
N4QOG	L. E. Fairey	408 Centeridge Drive	Columbia SC 29229	803-788-8061
N4RF	Riek Neuman	1116 Mallard Landing Drive	Monroe NC 28110	704-289-3431
N4SU	Dave Kennedy	Route 3 Box 100	King NC 27021	910-983-0123
N4UII	Henry Elwell	2701 Rary Road	Cleveland NC 27013	704-278-4423
N4VHK	Henry Heidtmann	934 Franklin Street	Winston-Salem NC 27101	336-761-8223
N4XO	Dave Rawley	705 Rockford Road	High Point NC 27262	000-000-0000
N4ZC	Roger Burt	2421 Old NC 27	Mount Holly NC 28120	704-263-1133
N4ZX	John Lambert	4805 Sentinel Post Road	Charlotte NC 28226	704-542-0633
N4ZY	Jim Brown	6534 Bakers View Drive	Vale NC 28168	704-462-1628

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NA4LU	Nestor Ravenna	102 Auckland Lane	Matthews NC 28105	704-821-8418
NC4NC	Claude Oakes	410 Cherryville Road	Shelby NC 28150	704-480-0050
NC4US	Gene Willis	384 Highway 274	Vale NC 28168	704-276-2982
NW4N	Tommy Lineberry	102 Highland Street	Galax VA 24333	540-238-2494
W4AG	Robert Dieks	4941 Boulder Run Road	Hillsborough NC 27278	000-000-0000
W4BFB	c/o Mary Hunt	16007 Wynfield Creek Parkway	Huntersville NC 28078	000-000-0000
W4BZ	William A. Culpepper	900 Jefferson Drive	Charlotte NC 28270	704-365-9995
W4CC	John Covington	PO Box 217122	Charlotte NC 28221	704-442-1323
W4CZU	Bud Brown	PO Box 447	Taylorsville NC 28681	704-632-4828
W4DOU	Ross Sigmon	PO Box 70	Glendale Springs NC 28629	000-000-0000
W4HG	Wayne Ashworth	160 Bass Run	Salisbury NC 28146	704-633-9330
W4IRE	John Huffman	2400 Hoyt Street	Winston-Salem NC 27103	000-000-0000
W4JWG	Jack Guion	817 Lynbrook Drive	Charlotte NC 28211	704-365-3061
W4MBD	Robert McNeill II	PO Box 843	Morehead City NC 28557	919-726-7711
W4MDD	William Hutchison	73 Robin Hood Circle	Winston-Salem NC 27106	919-924-6781
W4MP	Mark Pearson	220 Morning Dale Road	Matthews NC 28105	704-814-4061
W4MPY	Wayne Carroll	682 Mount Pleasant Road	Matthews NC 28105	803-685-7204
W4MW	Roger Webb	PO Box 812	Mt. Holly NC 28120	704-827-6246
W4N7C	Ken Cannady	1929 Ewing Avenue	Charlotte NC 28203	000-000-0000
W4PVT	McFarland W. Wood jr.	5800 McAlpine Farm Road	Charlotte NC 28226	704-541-7929
W4QA	Rush Johnson	100 Horseman Cove	Matthews NC 28105	704-814-0486
W4S1	Rodney Harper	2480 Colewood Lane	Irrot Station NC 28080	704-735-7338
W4TJE	Jack Emerson	3283 Young Road	Lexington NC 27292	910-746-6441
W4UFO	Nobby Mills	132 Sunset View Lane	Statesville NC 28677	704-528-5013
W4UNP	Bill Jennings	650 Whitepine Drive	Catawba SC 29704	803-329-9095
W4UW	Richard Genaille	719 Quarterstaff Road	Winston-Salem NC 27104	919-765-4697
W4VHF	Ted Goldthorpe	2420-104 Roswell Avenue	Charlotte NC 28209	704-333-6872
W4WBT	Bill Taylor	214 Pelham Lane	Fort Mill SC 29715	803-548-0908
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W4WMMQ	Murphy Ratterree	264 Wayland Drive	Rock Hill SC 29732	803-366-9057
W4WN	Clifford Wagoner	9108 Chimney Ridge Trail	Charlotte NC 28269	704-598-5373
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W4WRW	Ronald Wheatley	4401 St. Ives Place	Charlotte NC 28211	704-365-6768
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WA4OJB	Ken Winston	3900 Brinton Place	Charlotte NC 28226	704-542-6294
WA4PLR	Pete Eldridge	220 Pinewood Lane	Rock Hill SC 29730	803-327-9284
WA4VKW	Kim Hinceman	2300 Murray Mack Road	Fort Mill SC 29715	803-547-6156

WB4LMI	Herman Burney	3240 Cumberland Road	Winston-Salem NC 27105	336-767-6773
WD4PIC	Cliff Brommer	7909 Howard Lane	Denver, NC 28037	704-483-7291
WM4I	Beecher Jesse	Route 2, Box 529	Wytheville VA 24382	000-000-0000
WQ4G	L. A. Simpson	3306 Old Charlotte Highway	Monroe NC 28110	704-283-6873
WT4XX	Larry Osborne	306 Foxwood Lane	Waxhaw NC 28173	704-844-1057
WU4G	Ron Bolton	12490 Ashbake Road	Ashland VA 23005	000-000-0000

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N8WRI	Brian Smithson	2138 M F Stewart Road	Clover SC 29710	803-222-0356
K8FSM	John Scott	16212 Walnut Lane	Cornelius NC 28031	704-896-9841
KC8FS	Hal Turley	657 Forest Circle	S. Charleston WV 25303	304-744-5949
WA8WV	David Ellis	610 Hillsdale Drive	Charleston WV 25302	304-344-1488
WA9TWO	Frank Kolar	104 Rock Creek Drive	Greenwood SC 29646	864-229-5639
N0DKB	Garv Fav	7321 Ricewell Road	Charlotte NC 28226	704-542-3874

The following story appeared in *Tower Times*, the publication of the NATE (National Association of Tower Erectors). We reprint it here to demonstrate that even professionals sometimes get in trouble. As you work on your tower/antenna systems this summer, remember: SAFETY FIRST! If in doubt, seek help or advice before attempting your job.

Windmilling - The Anatomy Of A Tower Catastrophe by Robert Gonsett

This article describes the step-by-step events that led to the tower collapse, which claimed the life of Andy Figge, a well-respected rigger and Registered Professional Civil Engineer. The article was written at the request of several Southern California broadcast engineers who had close ties with Andy and wanted to understand the events that cost him his life. Hopefully, this understanding will help others avoid similar tragedies.

Here, then, is how the tragedy appears to have unfolded: On February 10, 1999, Andy Figge was in the process of installing a 250 foot guyed uniform cross-section tower at radio station WEUP (AM), Huntsville, Alabama. He had erected the first 100 feet of tower and had attached three fiberglass guy lines to the top of that tower. The remaining 150 feet of tower was lying on the ground in a continuous length where it had been pre-assembled out of 10-foot sections. The plan was to use a crane to set the 150 footer on top of the existing 100 footer and that would be done in two stages.

The first stage involved connecting a crane cable to the side of the 150 footer, so there was about 60 feet of tower on one side of the connection point and 90 feet on the other. The 150-foot section was successfully lifted upright and temporarily set parallel against the existing 100-foot tower section with the bottoms of both sections essentially at ground level. (The base of the 100-foot section was anchored to its "point type" foundation while the bottom of the 150 footer was resting firmly on the ground.) Since the crane was not tall enough to lift the 150 footer into place with the crane cable attached at the 90-foot mark, Andy reconnected the cable to a point that was only 70 feet above ground. That left 80 feet of tower above the connection point and caused an obviously unstable situation where the tower could "windmill" and turn over. Andy had anticipated that state of affairs and had already attached weights to the bottom of the 150-foot section to prevent overturning.

In the second stage of the project, Andy was atop the 100-foot tower section and secured to the tower with his climbing belt. He was ready to bolt the bottom of the 150 footer to the top of the 100 footer as soon as the crane completed the lift. A decision was made to raise the 150-foot section, just a little, to make sure that the added weights were sufficient to prevent windmilling. Unfortunately, the weights were not sufficient. The bottom of the 150-foot tower section moved out horizontally at an alarming rate (the crane cable attachment point serving as the pivot) and the bottom of the 150 footer headed directly for the studio/transmitter building.

The crane operator reportedly tried to set the load down, but could not do so in time. Seconds later, the bottom of the 150' tower section slammed into the underside of the roof eave. That brought the rotation of the 70-foot portion to a halt. Of course, the 80-foot portion wanted to keep going. This state of affairs put tremendous strain on what we could now call the "top" tower leg of the 150-foot section. A leg bolt broke (calculations suggest that its ultimate strength was exceeded) so that the 150 foot section folded in two with the 80 foot end eventually coming to rest on one of the fiberglass guy wires that held Andy's 100 foot tower section upright. The guy line reportedly held at first, then broke as the tower metal slid down and sheared or sliced the line.

Andy was never able to unbuckle himself and rode the 100 footer down as it toppled onto the roof of the studio/transmitter building. He was reportedly killed instantly. There were no other injuries or fatalities associated with the accident.

Ralph Young, president of Empire Crane Service, commented that a safety meeting had been held on Monday prior to the job, and that the crane operator had attended. Andy presented himself professionally and there was no question in anyone's mind that he had carefully thought over each step of the job, and that he was well qualified to complete it.

Through the course of this project, the staff and management of Empire Crane and WEUP had grown to respect and care about Andy as an individual. They were severely shaken by the tragedy. Empire Crane had reportedly been in business 34 years without a major injury or accident.

By clearly understanding the step-by-step events that led to the fatality, it is hoped that similar accidents will be prevented. This article is published as part of the CGC Communicator newsletter and may be reprinted or republished - free of-charge - provided the story is unaltered and printed in full, including this section.

A look at the WELLER PORTASOL

Recently, Al Guin, W4ZQB called to see if I could do some repair work for him. Al needed a replacement Antenna Mart switch installed on his 100-foot self-supporting tower. Those of you familiar with this switch design know it uses multi-conductor control cable. Those of you familiar with the original, WOMLY-designed units know they used an Amphenol plug and jack. The new units have a simple barrier strip for the control cable. So, we knew before leaving the ground that a short jumper would be needed. While there are a number of solutions to the *"How can I connect two wires together, mechanically and electrically?"* question, none really help you at the top of a tower. I'd brought several hundred feet of #12 AC cable and my trusty 260-watt Weller gun in preparation. But as Al handed me the switch, he mentioned he had a portable soldering iron—showing me a Weller Portasol. No cords, batteries, long AC cables, or cartridges. Running on standard butane lighter fuel, with a flint-spark igniter in the cap, a catalytic converter for powerful (but flameless) combustion, and a chisel tip, the iron was so lightweight I was skeptical. And I was concerned when I first got the iron going—I couldn't see any flame. But it worked great! I ordered one from Hosfelt Electronics the next day—a \$45 investment for soldering successfully on the tower, or anywhere you're away from a convenient AC source. -K4ZA