



# The LongPath

A North Alabama DX Club Publication

## Special points of interest:

- Ode to W&W
- April Program
- Short Skip
- Time and Technology
- April DX Contests
- DX Banquet

## How to Join

- \* Come to a club meeting;
- \* or send in an application by mail (form on [www.NADXC.org](http://www.NADXC.org))
- \* or call Jason Amos at (256)963-6833

## Ode to W&W Electronics

By Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

The message scribbled across the top of the newspaper clipping which appear on my desk said “Have you ever been to this place?” Pictured were the counter and a cluttered aisle at W&W Electronics, and the proprietor himself, a fixture in Huntsville for at least fifty years.

Of course I’ve been to this place. It was a sure source for ferric chloride, and there always seemed to be a bottle of it sitting on the desk when I walked in. This was fortunate, because if I was in a hurry, the last thing I needed to do was wander around finding all sorts of things I didn’t know I needed. This was never really necessary: if you asked, Mr. Wallace would zip through the labyrinth and locate the item in question, or maybe deliver the dreaded “I guess we’re all out”. Rarely was he really out of what you wanted, or at least, out of something which would do. Back around thanksgiving, I needed a stud-mounted zener – 15 V, I think – for an SB-210. Why a place smaller than Digikey would have one of these in stock is beyond me, but he did—and just one.

I made a pilgrimage there the day after I learned of their impending demise. I ran into Greg Sarratt, W4OZK. We were apparently both milling around, looking for nothing in particular, as though W&W were the natural place to stop on the way from here to there. I asked Greg rhetorically what we would do—W&W, Mock,

Austin, Webb, and perhaps other establishments before I arrived in Huntsville had now dwindled to one. He reminded me there were hamfests, and that’s certainly true—I guess I’ll be attending more.

When I arrived at the DIN plug section of the store, I realized I needed some—7-pin or 8-pin, circular or in-line, I couldn’t remember—better get one of each, just in case. I overheard another customer asking why they were going out of business. One might expect that after fifty years or so, Mr. Wallace just decided he’d had enough fun, but that wasn’t the answer. “It’s this throw-away society”, he said. “Used to be, if your radio, or record player, or TV or something broke, you’d take it to somebody to get it fixed. Now you just chuck it and get a new one. Those TV repair men kept me in business for a long time. I guess I outlasted most of them.” The persistent customer asked who might take the place of W&W. “Only a lunatic would get into this business these days” opined Mr. Wallace.

The counter was crowded with customers who seemed to have a better idea of their needs than I, or who had already had a stroll of the aisles. Rather than wait in line, I thought I’d take a quick spin. Here was a bag of nice, shiny 0.022  $\mu$ F capacitors, and next to it 0.15s—lots of them. I grabbed one of each, and then spied the color-

*Cont’d on p. 2*

## Receiver Revolution

Program by Bob De Pierre, K8KI

Bob explores differences in architecture and implementation between the ubiquitous up-conversion 1st IF receiver, and software-defined receivers of the Flex-5000 and Soft Rock ilk, with particular attention to the first mixer and distortion products. See you around 6:15 for dinner, 7:00 for the business meeting, and 7:30 for Bob’s program.



**The LongPath Staff**

**Interim Publisher/Editor:**

Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

**Departments:**

Tom Homsley, N4WBS, Short Skip

Chuck Lewis, N4NM, DX Contests

**Key Contributors:**

Rick Walker, K4TD

**Photographer/Consultant:**

Jared Cassidy, KQ4VT

**Table of Contents**

Ode to W&W Electronics	1
April Program	1
DX Club Repeater Resolution	2
Short Skip	3
Time and Technology Wait for No Man	3
W&W Electronics Going Out of Business	3
April DX Contests	5
Hamfest DX Banquet	5
Welcome Back Jamie Lucas	6

burst crystals: I'm a real sucker for crystals, but have already devoted two cigar boxes of shelf space to them, so I reined myself in and only got one package of big ones, and one package of little ones. Down the next aisle were coil forms: here were more of the big square ones I had previously purchased for some homebrew 262 kHz IF transformers. I passed them by—I already had a spare or two. Across the aisle was a tube tester filament transformer with about thirty taps. It looked brand new, and probably was about forty years ago. I think it's still there.

At half price, I made it home without a huge hole in my wallet. Some of my treasures, like those capacitors, were to re-supply dwindling supplies of their kind and value, and were therefore easily justified. Others, like the plastic box with the nice-fitting molded lid, went into the general-purpose junk-box, to await a flash of inspiration. Sifting through that box so as to order things from bottom to top by decreasing mass to keep things like power transformers

from crushing less-substantial components (and in case of earthquake), I saw several previous W&W purchases still awaiting their purpose in life.

There are hamfests, but not necessarily one close by when you need it. There are mail-order establishments with great prices and ships-the-same-day service, but you don't just stumble (literally) over a tube-tester transformer, nor do shiny red capacitors catch your eye in the on-line catalog. I guess I'll be paying a few more visits to Mock — for a while, at least.

Thanks, Mr. Wallace. That zener did the trick for the SB-210, and those IF transformers worked, even though they were a little on the big side, and a real pain to wind. None of the DIN plugs actually fit, but don't worry—I'll figure out something to do with them, and that plastic box, too.

Good-bye, W&W Electronics.

73, Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

**DX Club Repeater Resolution**

At the March meeting, Ron Shaffer W4VM proposed to swap a dual-band mobile rig for the new RF drawer he put in the DX Club Repeater, value at about \$150. This is a GE Master II 100W, RX preamp capable. Ron and Ralph Hogan, W4XE fixed this up for the club, so that the repeater is now fit for general use.

Johnny KR4F moved to approve this swap, and Mike Werner KF4BOG seconded, and it passed by acclamation.

The club thanks to Ron and Ralph for their efforts, and looks forward to hearing this repeater on the air, passing DX tips back and forth throughout the Tennessee Valley DX community.

**WANTED**

I need a short piece of 2 inch Diameter Boom stock (3 to 4 ft). Also, looking for various pieces of Aluminum Tubing from old / broken / damaged Cushcraft, Hy-Gain or Mosley Antennas.

What have you got that is cluttering your garage?

Any damaged TH3, TH6, or TA33 antennas available?

**Contact Tom N4KG@AOL.com**

## Continuing Ed

ARRL Continuing Education Course Registration: Registration remains open through Sunday, April 6, 2008, for online course sessions beginning on Friday, April 18, 2008: Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Level 2 (EC-002); Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Level 3 (EC-003R2); Antenna Modeling (EC-004); HF Digital Communications (EC-005); VHF/UHF – Life Beyond the Repeater (EC-008), and Radio Frequency Propagation (EC-011). (ARRL Letter)

## DXpedition to San Serriffe

San Serriffe, a small republic located in the Indian Ocean will be host to a month-long DXpedition beginning April 1. San Serriffe is composed of several semi-colon-shaped islands, with two main islands named Upper Caisse and Lower Caisse and a capital, Bodoni. The DXpedition will be led by Gen. Pica – a Comic from Ariel California - who comes from a Century-long tradition of writing books about DXing.

### NADXC Officers

President: **Tom Duncan**, KG4CUY  
duncant1@ds-s.com or 256-539-7544

Vice President: **Kevin Hibbs**, KG4TEI  
kg4tei@gmail.com or 606-224-0175

Secretary/Treasurer: **Jason Amos**, KD4BJW  
kd4bjw@arrl.net or 256-963-6833

Director: **Mike Maples**, K4ADK  
mmaples9@comcast.net or 256-534-6563

Director: **Vic Holland**, K4RVH  
k4rvh@arrl.net or 256-721-9106

## Remote Control

There is an article on the ARRL web site about how to set up a remote control operation over the internet using Ham Radio Deluxe with Skype for audio. There is a rumor that Simon is working on an add-on to HRD that will obviate the need for Skype. <http://www.arrl.org/news/features/2008/03/28/10033/?nc=1>

## Solar Update

Solar cycle 24 is still going but so is Solar cycle 23. According to Dr. David Hathaway of NASA MSFC, it is not unusual for sunspots from two solar cycles to be present at the same time.

## Dayton

The Dayton Hamvention which runs May 16 – 18 is drawing nigh. Get those res-

ervations in now. Info at <http://www.hamvention.org/>

## Announced DXpeditions

NG3K maintains a web site for DXpeditions with links to their sites at <http://www.ng3k.com/Misc/adxo.html>

## April Contests

Information concerning upcoming contests is provided in the WA7BNM contest calendar at <http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/contestcal.html> and on NG3K site at <http://www.ng3k.com/Contest/> which lists stations that will be QRV during major contests.



**de N4WBS**

## Time and Technology Wait for No Man

By Rick Walker, K4TD

*[Editors note: This article appeared as an email on the Alabama Contest Group reflector, and has been given a title, and edited to fit the LongPath context. It explores a topic which is of interest both to DXers and contesters. Coincidentally, the receiver typically used for CWSkimmer is the Softrock, the architecture (in particular, the mixer) of which is the topic of this month's program.]*

I don't know if any of the rest of you have grown weary of the endless debate on the CQ-Contest reflector regarding the use of various items available to contesters such as SO2R and CWSkimmer; however, I have. After reading many varied and different definitions and ideas for classifications for these items, I decided to investigate the matter for myself.

One of the first items I ran across on CQ-Contest that I disagreed with is the notion that SO2R is simply a "skill" while the use of packet or CWSkimmer constitutes "technology." I felt that clarification of this matter (even if only in my own mind) would shed light on other areas of confusion as well.

I live and work in a technological world full of scientists, engineers, laypersons, and, yes, even marketing professionals and lawyers. I have to manage the creation, evolution, distribution and protection of technology and intellectual property (IP). I have always been struck by the broad misunderstanding of the terms "intellectual property" and "technology" among the groups charged with the creation, distribution and protection of these items. I decided that my best course of action was to go "back to the basics" and build

Cont'd on p. 4

up an understanding one block at a time.

Before proceeding, I would like to state that, unless otherwise noted, the source of the definitions of the terms used in this analysis is the Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Other sources such as Oxford English Dictionary and the Merriam-Webster on-line dictionary were also invaluable.

Let's start by a review of the term "technology." Technology is a broad concept that deals with a species' usage and knowledge of tools and crafts, and how it affects a species' ability to control and adapt to its environment. The Merriam-Webster dictionary definition of technology is:

*the practical application of knowledge especially in a particular area*

and

*a capability given by the practical application of knowledge.*

It seems that the definition of "technology" is a bit more complex than might be thought to be the case. In fact, careful analysis of the final nine words of the previous definition leads one to conclude that "technology" could be based solely on knowledge so long as that "knowledge" was used in some form of practical application. Therefore, let's take a look at the definition of "knowledge" to see if we are more enlightened.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, Knowledge is defined as

*(i) expertise, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject, (ii) what is known in a particular field or in total; facts and information or (iii) awareness or familiarity gained by experi-*

*ence of a fact or situation.*

The term knowledge is also used to mean the confident understanding of a subject with the ability to use it for a specific purpose.

In most cases the practical utilization of knowledge is to transform our environment in one way or another. To achieve this objective frequently requires the use of tools. A tool is a device or a piece of equipment which typically provides an advantage in accomplishing a task, or provides an ability that is not naturally available to the user of a tool. The Merriam-Webster dictionary definition of tool is:

*something (as an instrument or apparatus) used in performing an operation or necessary in the practice of a vocation or profession.*

We are getting close to the end of our dissection of the definition of technology. It only remains for us to have an understanding of what is meant by a "craft." A craft is a skill, especially involving practical arts. It may refer to a trade or particular art. The Merriam-Webster dictionary definition of craft is:

*skill in planning, making, or executing.*

Since the definition of craft is dependent on the definition of skill, let's investigate. According to my research the definition of a skill is:

*the learned capacity or talent to carry out pre-determined results often with the minimum outlay of time, energy, or both.*

So it appears that a "technology" is created when we choose to employ our knowledge to accomplish a specific purpose utilizing, when necessary, appro-

prate tools and skills. It is important to note that this definition of technology is recursive. This should be interpreted in this case to mean that one of the tools used in the creation of technology A could actually be the end result of the development of technology B. This indicates that it is possible for a technology to have other technologies embedded into it as core ingredients. This definition is consistent with the generally accepted understanding of technology as I encounter it in my day-to-day business dealings.

Examination of the definition might lead us to conclude that each of us actually employs our own particular technology when we build a contesting capability at our respective stations. Our individual knowledge, purposes and skills will vary from person to person. Notwithstanding the fact that any of us may choose to develop our own custom tools, the tools available to us for contesting purposes are the most consistent and uniform components of our respective technologies. Therefore, specification of acceptable tools seems to form a reasonable basis for establishing understandable, consistent rules to govern our contesting activities.

Most of us appear to agree that "packet" and CWSkimmer do indeed constitute technology, but there seems to be general disagreement on SO2R. So, let's turn our attention to the concept of Single Operator Two Radio (SO2R). The most basic definition of SO2R that I could find is:

*the use of two radios to listen to one band while transmitting on another band.*

Let's investigate whether or not this "concept" rises to the level of technology. First, the very definition of SO2R provides us with the specific purpose it

## April DX Contests

By Chuck Lewis, N4NM

### SP DX Contest, (CW & SSB), 160 – 10M

Apr. 5, 1500Z to Apr. 6, 1500Z

Exchange: RS(T) plus Serial # or SP province

See page 82, Apr. QST and [www.contest.spdxc.org/pl/en/index.php](http://www.contest.spdxc.org/pl/en/index.php)

### EA RTTY Contest (RTTY), 80 – 10M

Apr. 5, 1600Z to Apr. 6 1600Z

Exchange: RST plus serial # or EA province

See page 82, Apr. QST and [www.rttycontesting.com/rules/earttyrules2008.pdf](http://www.rttycontesting.com/rules/earttyrules2008.pdf)

### EU Spring Sprints, (CW), 80-10M

Apr. 12, 1600Z to 1959Z

Exchange: Both calls, Serial number, your name.

See page 82, Apr. QST.

### Japan Int'l. DX CW Contest (CW), (80-10M)

Apr. 12, 0700Z to Apr. 13, 1300Z

Exchange: RST plus CQ zone; JAs send RST plus prefecture #

See page 82, Apr. QST and <http://www.jidx.org>

### EU Spring Sprints, (SSB), 80-10M

Apr. 19, 1600Z to 1959Z

Exchange: Both calls, Serial number, your name.

See page 82, Apr. QST and <http://www.eusprint.com>

### YU DX Contest (CW & SSB), 160-10M

Apr. 19, 2100Z to Apr 20, 0500Z and

Apr 20, 0900Z to 1700Z

Exchange: ITU zone only

See page 82, Apr. QST and <http://www.yudx.net>

### ES Open HF Championship, (CW & SSB), 80 & 40M

Apr 19, 0500Z-0859Z (4 segments for dupes)

Exchange: RS(T) plus Serial #

Note special hourly dupe rules (see website)

See Page 83, April QST and <http://www.erau.ee/index.php?newlang=eng>

### Helvetia Contest, (CW, SSB, Dig.), 160-10M

Apr. 26, 1300Z to Apr. 27, 1259

Exchange: RS(T) plus Serial # or Swiss canton

See Page 82, Apr. QST and [http://www.uska.ch/e\\_index.htm](http://www.uska.ch/e_index.htm)

### OTHERS:

#### ARCI Spring QSO Party

1200Z, Apr 5 to 2400Z, Apr 6

#### YLRL DX to NA Contest (CW)

1400Z Apr. 4 – 0200Z Apr. 6

#### UBA Spring Contest (SSB)

0600Z – 1000Z Apr. 13

#### Yuri Gagarin International DX Contest

2100Z, Apr 12 to 2100Z, Apr 13

#### YLRL DX to NA Contest (SSB)

1400Z Apr. 11 – 0200Z Apr. 13

#### RSGB 80m Club Championship, (SSB)

1900Z-2030Z, Apr 16

#### Holyland DX Contest

0000Z-2359Z, Apr 19



#### TARA Skirmish (Digital)

0000Z– 2400Z Apr. 19

#### RSGB 80m Club Championship, (Data)

2000Z-2130Z, Apr 22

#### SP DX RTTY Contest (RTTY)

1200Z April 26 – 1200Z April 27

Dates & times often change or are misprinted in the journals; beware.

Chuck, N4NM

### Hamfest DX Banquet

By the LongPath Staff

The annual DX Banquet will be held this year on Hamfest Saturday, August 16th in the Ballet Room of the VBC. Our speaker will be Ann Santos, WA1S, of the [TX5C Clipperton DXpedition](http://www.tx5cclipperton.com).

Tickets are \$35 per person. Since both the YLRL Convention and ARRL Southeastern Division convention are both held in conjunction with the hamfest, we're hoping for a good crowd at the banquet. Get your tickets today from Jason Amos,, KD4BJW, [kd4bjw@arrrl.net](mailto:kd4bjw@arrrl.net) or (256) 963-6833. Check out [www.hamfest.org](http://www.hamfest.org) for official Hamfest updates.

is intended to achieve. Second, SO2R requires us to employ our knowledge of contest objectives, RF engineering and desirable hardware requirements. Third, the individual components we employ in the endeavor such as radios, switching devices, amplifiers, antennae and perhaps computer(s) clearly meet the definition of "tools." Finally, it takes skill to assemble the appropriate components into a configuration that is capable of effectively achieving the specific objective. If it looks like a technology and it smells like a technology and it feels like a technology, guess what: it's a technology! Therefore, I contend that SO2R is as much a form of technology as CWSkimmer although the use of SO2R technology requires a far different skill set than that required for the use of CWSkimmer technology.

In the pursuit of our respective amateur radio goals and objectives, we each create our individual technologies with the term "station" generally referring to the physical manifestation of available tools (some of which can themselves be technologies) and the term "operator" generally referring to the embodiment of knowledge and skills. Now, everyone would probably agree that the ability to copy CW requires knowledge of the Morse code and the skill to decipher it properly.

When you couple this knowledge and skill with a specific purpose (such as communicating with one another), what do you have? You guessed it; it's a technology as well. Therefore, the term that we generally refer to as "operator" also has technology embedded into it although no one generally recognizes it as such.

Part 97.1(b) states that a fundamental purpose of the Amateur Radio Service is "Continuation and extension of the amateur's proven ability to contribute to the advancement of the radio art." Hopefully no one will disagree that this requires us to continually strive to enhance our "skills" and improve the "technology" we employ. Armed with a new awareness that some of the "technology" we employ as amateur radio operators can actually be embedded within us as humans, I feel that we are compelled to evaluate ways and means to improve and evolve this technology. I think that this is one desirable outcome of the evolution of the CWSkimmer technology.

As far as I can determine, however, Part 97 provides no specific guidance as to the composition or conduct of "radiosport." Since engaging in radiosport activity is voluntary, I suppose it falls to the participants to define its

purpose, value, goals and objectives. Given that that's the case, we need to be more specific about the items we actually seek to test in our radiosport events. Are we contributing to the development and improvement of modern operator skills? Are our radiosport events static or will they evolve? Are we fostering an environment of technological excellence and growth? Are we willing to fairly evaluate the substitution of one set of tools and/or technologies for another in our stations? Do we fear technology because of its potential to upset the "balance of power" or do we each boldly embrace technology and learn new skills to effectively employ it ourselves? Are we going to ban disruptive technology and thereby neglect any competitive advantage it might eventually represent?

It will take time and cooperation to come to a mutually agreeable solution to these and other questions regarding the future of radiosport. I don't know if this is really possible any more given all the controversy surrounding the issues, but I do know that time and technology wait for no man.

73,

Rick K4TD



## Welcome Back Jamie Lucas

The following email was received March 25th:

"I am no longer living in Huntsville, AL but I was reading the January issue of the LongPath and was saddened to see that membership had dropped in the club. Although I no longer live in Alabama, my loyalty runs very deep for the Huntsville clubs and I would like to know if you mind if I re-join the NADXC. I have been in-active for a couple of

years now and am in the process of setting up a hamshack so I can get on HF and do the one things I love: DXing and contesting. I am currently living in Henefer, Utah and although I will not be able to attend meetings of the club I still have a loyalty to it and I want to see it to continue and grow therefore I would like to re-join. I was a member 3 or 4 years ago when I was living in Huntsville, then my call was either K9LTR or W4LDX.

"Thanks, Jamie Lucas N7OEY."

That's what we like to hear! Welcome back, Jamie. We look forward to hearing you on the air, and should you find yourself in Huntsville the second Tuesday of a month, please stop by and re-introduce yourself.

73,

Members of the NADXC.