

# Northwest Indiana DX CLUB

Volume 11, Issue 8

August 2023

## President's Corner

Hello,

Our next meeting will most likely be in September. Jerry is trying to set up a ZOOM meeting.

73  
John W3ML  
Good DXing!

## "Working the World from the Black Hole"

NWI DX Club Website  
<http://nwidxclub.weebly.com/>



Don't forget Steve Mollman is our QSL Card Checker.

DXCC Card Checking is available by appointment and may be available at meetings. E-Mail [kd9hl@arrl.net](mailto:kd9hl@arrl.net) for an appointment or to make other arrangements.

*Northwest Indiana DX Club Officers and Staff*

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ARRL Card Checker	KD9HL	Steve Mollman	<a href="mailto:kd9hl@ARRL.net">kd9hl@ARRL.net</a>

**Reminder, the NWIDX Club has a club call W9NWI.**

The call is available to members for use during contests, special events, Field Day, etc. To schedule dates for its use, contact the trustee, Steve Mollman – KD9HL. [kd9hl@arri.net](mailto:kd9hl@arri.net)

QSL cards are available.

## **Notice:**

**Articles in the Northwest Indiana DX Club Newsletter (except for those separately copyrighted) may be reprinted, provided proper credit is given.**

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# The Question of the Month

*(The correct answer is at the end of the Newsletter)*

When using WSJT-X, under “DECODE” there is an option to “Enable AP”. What does “AP” mean?

- A. Advanced Placement
- B. A Priori
- C. Anti-Pirate
- D. Accelerated Posting



## DX LISTINGS VS SPOTTING NETWORKS

By  
Jerry Hess, W9KTP

I have often wondered how accurate DX listings are when compared to actual on the air spotting. Most often I do not encounter any of the recently listed DX. Is this due to the wrong time or maybe frequency or just poor propagation? To answer these questions I took the June 29, 2023 ARRL DX Listings and checked for the appearance of each country on the spotting network I normally use. Over the period from 6/30 to 7/11 of the 16 countries listed, only 11 were found. This is only a 69% or maybe a grade of ‘C’. The “No Show” countries were Malawi, 7Q, Philippines, DU, Italy Special Event, I, Guam, KH2 and Czech Republic, OK. There are many reasons a country might not be active during this period. After all, hams are people and they have other responsibilities besides being on the air. Hopefully, they will reappear at some later date for hams that need that country. The data I collected is contained in the following spreadsheet.

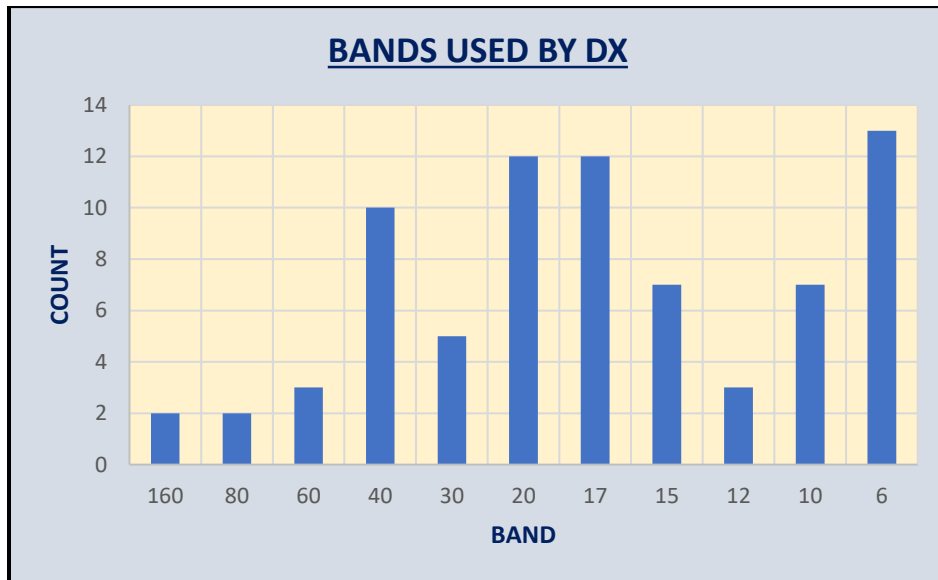
DX LISTING VS SPOTTING NETWORK					
COUNTRY	SCHEDULE	CALL	DATE	BANDS	TIMES
TIMOER-LESTE	7/2-7/15	4W6RU	Jun 30	30/10	14-15
			2-Jul	15/17	18-20
			5-Jul	15/12/10	14-15
			11-Jul	160/17/12	18
CROATIA	7/1-7/30	9A150TESLA	8-Jul	20	9
BAHAMAS	7/1-7/8	C6ADX	2-Jul	20/17/6	12-19
			4-Jul	30/20	10-13

			5-Jul	17/10	19-23
			7-Jul	15/6	15-23
<b>F.R. OF GERMANY</b>	<b>7/1-7/30</b>	<b>DL0SOP</b>	2-Jul	160/40/20	1-5
			3-Jul	40	18
			5-Jul	40/30/20	02-05
			8-Jul	80/40	15,21
			9-Jul	160/80	02
<b>ST. BARTHELEMY</b>	<b>7/1-7/8</b>	<b>FJ/K3TRM</b>	Jun 30	6	15-22
			2-Jul	6	12-20
			4-Jul	6	19-21
			6-Jul	6	16-19
<b>ST. PIERRE &amp; MIQUELON</b>	<b>7/1-7/11</b>	<b>FP/KV1J</b>	Jun 30	60/6/17/10	1-3
			2-Jul	20	15-18
			4-Jul	60/40/10/6	15-23
			11-Jul	40/17/15	12-21
<b>LUXEMBOURG</b>	<b>7/1-12/31</b>	<b>LX90RTL</b>	1-Jun	40	5
			2-Jul	30/20/17/10	4,12-16
			4-Jul	60/40/30/17/15	2-4,16-17
			7-Jul	40	21
			8-Jul	40	5-9
<b>GREENLAND</b>	<b>7/1-7/18</b>	<b>OX3LX</b>	Jun 27	17/15	3-13,15-16
			2-Jul	17/15/6	22-03
			4-Jul	17/6	23-03
			9-Jul	6	01-02
			10-Jul	20	9
			11-Jul	12	00
<b>ELLESMERE ISL</b>	<b>7/1-7/12</b>	<b>VY0ERE</b>	11-Jul	20	04
<b>BERMUDA</b>	<b>7/1-7/8</b>	<b>VP9/G4OSY</b>	Jun 28	20/6	23
			1-Jul	20	11
			5-Jul	17	17-18
			8-Jul	20	11

MYANMAR	7/1-9/30	XZ2B	Jun 19	10/6	4-7, 11
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**FREQUENCIES USED BY DX**

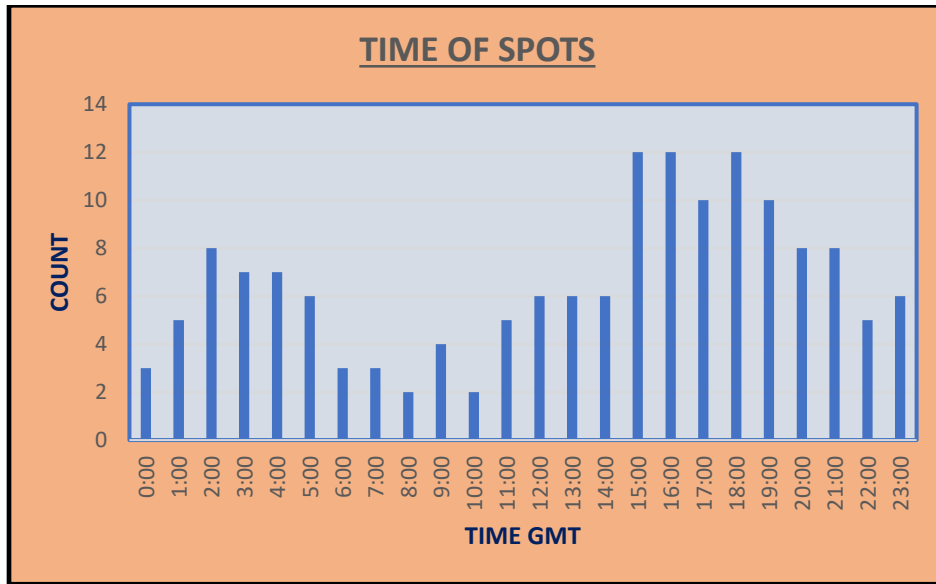
From this blur of numbers, what can we learn from the data? For a starter, I plotted the bands used by the DX stations.



I thought this was interesting since it shows the current upward frequency trend due to improved propagation. Since last year this a great shift. Furthermore, it indicates which bands to select when searching for new ones before the crowd gets there.

**TIME OF OPERATIONS**

Also I looked at the times when the DX stations are on the air.



From this graph it appears for the Central Time Zone that late afternoon and later in the evening are the best choices.

**PROPAGATION**

Finally, it seemed necessary to check when the propagation was best for us in the Central Zone. I used the W6ELPROP program with a solar flux of 172. I chose the times when the propagation was at least 50% favorable. One drawback of the W6EL programs is that it only covers 3.0 to 30.0 Mhz.

PROPAGATION AVAILABLE FOR BAND SPOT									
CALLS	BANDS	80	60	40	30	20	17	15	10
4W							X		
9A					X				
C6						X	X		X
DL		X		X	X	X			
FP			X	X			X		
LX				X	X	X	X		
OX						X	X		
VY						X			
VP9						X	X		

There was no propagation available for Myanmar and St. Barthelemy was all on 6 meters.

### **FINAL COMMENTS**

For a comparison, I checked the number of active DX stations from the 7/13/2023 ARRL listings and found a much better showing with only three “No-Shows” out of fifteen stations listed or 80%. Not surprising that situations vary week to week.

After some self-examination, my guess is that I don’t spend enough time on the air to catch more of the active DX stations. When I am on the air usually in mid-afternoon or sometimes in the evening it’s rare that I do so for more than an hour. I get a little uncomfortable after sitting longer than that.

In any case I hope you find this article interesting.

73’s,  
Jerry

# **Artificial Intelligence and a Vanity Call Sign (Fun and Games with AI using Chat GPT)**

**By Steve Mollman-KD9HL**

A number of years ago the National Weather Service purchased a Cray Super Computer and began a program of inputting literally millions of data points of historical weather. Using constantly modified algorithms (they use several models) the weather prediction business has gone from being the subject of jokes to having accuracy that often predicts conditions by the hour several days in advance. The Buzz Word for this technology today is “Artificial Intelligence”.

Artificial Intelligence recently has become the subject of much discussion with the service “Chat GTP” the current popular choice for many people. ( <https://chat.openai.com/>) Curiosity led us to ask what Chat GTP thought would be the ideal vanity call sign.

**What would be the best amateur radio call sign to ask for in the 9th call area?**

## **ChatGPT**

As of my last update in September 2021, the specific call sign you can request as an amateur radio operator in the 9th call area may vary depending on the country you are in. The 9th call area generally refers to radio amateurs in the United States, specifically the states of Connecticut (CT), Maine (ME), Massachusetts (MA), New Hampshire (NH), Rhode Island (RI), and Vermont (VT).

In the United States, amateur radio call signs are issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The format of the call sign includes a region number, a single-letter prefix, a numeral, and a single-letter suffix. The region number for the 9th call area is usually represented by the numeral "1."

To obtain a specific call sign, you typically have to apply through the FCC's Universal Licensing System (ULS) and request an available call sign of your preference. The best call sign for you may be one that has personal significance or is easy to remember, but the availability of specific call signs can change over time due to other operators obtaining or relinquishing call signs.

To find the currently available call signs in the 9th call area, you can visit the FCC's ULS website (<https://wireless2.fcc.gov/ULsEntry/licManager/login.jsp>) and search for available call signs using the "Advanced Search" option.

Keep in mind that this information might have changed since my last update, so I recommend checking the most current regulations and availability from the FCC or other relevant authorities before making your request.

### **I know how to check the FCC database, but what is the best call sign?**

#### **ChatGPT**

Determining the "best" call sign for amateur radio is subjective and can vary depending on individual preferences. Amateur radio call signs typically follow a standardized format based on the region, prefix, numeral, and suffix. The specific call sign you might consider as the "best" could depend on various factors:

1. **Memorability:** Some operators prefer call signs that are easy to remember, either because they have a personal significance or because they form a mnemonic.
2. **Shortness:** Shorter call signs can be easier to use in quick communications, especially in contesting or emergency situations.
3. **Meaningful Letters:** Certain operators might look for call signs that contain specific letters representing their initials, favorite words, or other meaningful combinations.
4. **Pronunciation:** For some, a call sign that is easy to pronounce and understand phonetically can be preferred.
5. **Availability:** The best call sign for you might be the one that is currently available for assignment. If you have a specific call sign in mind, its availability might influence your choice.
6. **Regional Association:** Some operators might prefer call signs that represent their geographic area or a specific region they have an affiliation with.

Ultimately, the "best" call sign is a personal choice, and there is no one-size-fits-all answer. It's essential to consider what matters most to you in a call sign and what aligns with your preferences and interests as an amateur radio operator. If you have specific criteria or preferences, you can search for available call signs that meet those criteria using the FCC's Universal Licensing System (ULS) or other relevant regulatory authorities in your country.



## Okay, what is the most "readable" call sign for a CW operator?

### ChatGPT

For a CW (Morse code) operator, the most "readable" call signs generally have a few characteristics that make them easier to interpret and transmit in Morse code:

1. **Shortness:** Short call signs are usually more readable as they can be sent and received quickly. Fewer characters reduce the chances of errors and make it easier for other operators to copy.
2. **Distinctive Letters:** Call signs with letters that have distinct Morse code patterns are preferable. Avoid call signs with similar-sounding letters or letters with long Morse representations.
3. **Rhythmic Patterns:** Call signs with a smooth rhythmic pattern are easier to recognize, especially during high-speed CW operations.
4. **Avoid Numbers:** Including numbers in a call sign can make it less readable, as they require additional characters to transmit and might be misheard.
5. **Avoid Similarities:** Try to avoid call signs that have similar patterns to common abbreviations or prosigns used in Morse code. This helps prevent confusion during exchanges.

Based on these criteria, call signs with a shorter format and distinct letters like "K1A," "N5M," "W3L," etc., can be considered more readable for CW operators. Of course, availability and personal preferences play a role in selecting a call sign, but focusing on these readability factors can enhance your CW operating experience.

Ultimately, readability is subjective and can vary based on an individual's experience and proficiency in Morse code. If possible, you can also practice sending and receiving different call signs to see which ones feel the most comfortable for you.

## I have to take exception to your description of the 9th Call area. What you said seems to match the 1st Call Area What is the correct description of the 9th Call Area?

### ChatGPT

Apologies for the confusion in my previous response. You are correct, and I appreciate your attention to detail. I misspoke, and I'll provide the correct description of the 9th Call Area for amateur radio operations in the United States.

The 9th Call Area refers to radio amateurs in the United States, specifically the states of Illinois (IL), Indiana (IN), and Wisconsin (WI). The states included in the 9th Call Area are part of the Central Region of the United States.

Here's the correct breakdown of the US Call Areas:

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1. 1st Call Area: Connecticut (CT), Maine (ME), Massachusetts (MA), New Hampshire (NH), Rhode Island (RI), Vermont (VT).
2. 2nd Call Area: New York (NY), New Jersey (NJ).
3. 3rd Call Area: Delaware (DE), District of Columbia (DC), Maryland (MD), Pennsylvania (PA).
4. 4th Call Area: Alabama (AL), Florida (FL), Georgia (GA), Kentucky (KY), North Carolina (NC), South Carolina (SC), Tennessee (TN).
5. 5th Call Area: Ohio (OH), West Virginia (WV). 6th Call Area: Illinois (IL), Indiana (IN), Wisconsin (WI).
6. 6<sup>th</sup> Call Area: California (CA)
7. 7th Call Area: Michigan (MI), Ohio (OH).
8. 8th Call Area: Arkansas (AR), Louisiana (LA), Mississippi (MS), New Mexico (NM), Texas (TX).
9. 9th Call Area: Iowa (IA), Kansas (KS), Missouri (MO), Nebraska (NE).

Once again, I apologize for the incorrect information in my previous response, and I hope this clarification helps. If you have any further questions or need more information, feel free to ask!

**Conclusion:** Sweeping claims about the powers of many AI programs seem to be exaggerated. This little exercise shows while AI can offer some practical but general advice, the technology can't pull off some involved or even basic chores without human assistance. It also generated a glaring error in its description of the 9<sup>th</sup> Call Area. Quite a bit of what was generated can be best described as "fluff"!

Based on this modest experiment, it is unimaginable that Chat GPT AI could write a Master's Thesis, a legal brief or even a high school theme paper. There may come sometime in the future when AI can think out problems and offer specific solutions, but generally the future is not now.

In the meantime, the National Weather Service recently put into service two new HP/Cray super computers.

The enhanced computing and storage capacity will allow NOAA to deploy higher-resolution models to better capture small-scale features like severe thunderstorms, more realistic model physics to better capture the formation of clouds and precipitation, and a larger number of individual model simulations to better quantify model certainty. The end result is even better forecasts and warnings to support public safety and the national economy.

Maybe the day will come where the Weather Service can detect a butterfly in the Amazon Rainforest fluttering its wings and setting off a series of events that results in a major weather event in Northwest Indiana. Stranger things have happened!

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# Here is the new Dues for an ARRL Membership

## ARRL Membership Dues

The ARRL Board of Directors approved increasing the regular membership dues rate to \$59 a year starting January 1, 2024.

The following dues rates and fees are effective January 1, 2024.

Membership Type	Description	1 Year	3 Years
US	All the benefits of ARRL membership plus 4 digital magazines.	\$59	\$174
add print <i>QST</i> magazine	12 issues of <i>QST</i> via standard mail. Membership required.	+ \$25	+ \$75
add print <i>On the Air</i> magazine	6 issues of <i>On the Air</i> magazine via standard mail. Membership required.	+ \$25	+ \$75
US + First-Class Mail® delivery of <i>QST</i>	12 issues of <i>QST</i> via First-Class Mail®.	\$132	N/A
Life Membership First-Class Mail® delivery of <i>QST</i> – paid annually	12 issues of <i>QST</i> via First-Class Mail® for a current Life Member.	\$48	N/A
Family	Must reside with primary member and have corresponding membership dates.	\$12	\$36
Student	Must be under the age of 26.	\$30	N/A
Blind	<a href="#">Requires a one-time signed and dated statement of Legal Blindness.</a>	\$12	\$36
International	All the benefits of ARRL membership plus 4 digital magazines.	\$59	\$174
International + <i>QST</i> via standard mail	Membership plus 12 issues of <i>QST</i> via standard mail.	\$95	\$282

### ARRL Life Membership and ARRL Life Membership 70+

Please note, new applications for Life Membership and ARRL Life Membership 70+ are not being accepted as of 7/21/2023 while new rates are being established.

## Summary of Dues Changes (effective January 1, 2024)

- Regular dues (in the US) will increase to \$59 per year on January 1, 2024.
- Members will continue to have access to *QST* and *On The Air* (OTA) magazines in digital form online.

— Print-and-mailed *QST* and *OTA* magazines become optional add-ons to membership. Each magazine subscription is \$25 per year.

— Those with regular memberships (a remaining term on a current membership) will need to purchase an add-on subscription to continue receiving printed *QST* and *OTA* after January 1, 2024.

— Current Life members as of July 2023 may choose to continue receiving printed *QST* or *OTA* at no additional cost by contacting ARRL between September 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024.

- Monthly payment plan options are being created for members aged 70+ to help senior members who are experiencing financial stress.
- We are undertaking work to determine revenue neutral pricing for Life Memberships. New applications for Life Membership are not being accepted as of 7/21/2023 while new rates are being established.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### 1. When was the last time that ARRL raised dues?

The last increases were in 2016; 8 years ago, and before that 2001.

### 2. Why did we need to raise dues?

We need to ensure a vibrant and financially healthy ARRL so we can continue to serve the Amateur Radio community. ARRL has experienced significant financial losses during the last 4 years due to inflation. We expect rising costs to continue and result in additional financial pressure.

### 3. Why does ARRL need \$59 per year for dues?

ARRL applies staff and resources to a variety of efforts that promote and protect Amateur Radio for the benefit of our members. Chief among these efforts are spectrum defense, regulatory advocacy at the International, Federal and State levels, support for licensing and operator training, work to promote Amateur Radio in schools, and more. ARRL also allocates resources to member benefits and programs such as Field Day, LoTW, contests, EmComm programs, member technical support, product reviews, and other programs. It is essential that ARRL continue these efforts to ensure the continued existence of Amateur Radio worldwide.

### 4. Why did ARRL make print *QST* and *On the Air* magazines paid subscription options?

All members will continue to have access to all four ARRL magazines in digital format online: *QST*, *On the Air*, *QEX*, and *NCJ*. Printing and mailing *QST* and *OTA* are an important part of ARRL's costs, and these costs have increased faster than inflation. Results from our member survey indicate that a significant portion of our members are willing to read these magazines in a digital form online. We chose this approach to minimize the increase in dues. This gives members a choice on whether to pay the additional cost for print magazines.

### 5. What was the purpose of the member survey that was conducted in May 2023?

We felt it was important to seek input from our members about various options under consideration and what they valued most about ARRL membership. This feedback from more than 20,000 members who responded was used extensively in our planning (see [dues survey](#) results).

### 6. What is ARRL doing to cut costs? Was there an alternative to a dues increase?

ARRL has been systematically taking steps to reduce costs for several years. Steps have included delaying hiring for open positions, outsourcing work to contractors in lieu of staffing full-time positions, consolidating responsibilities to reduce staffing levels, and other actions designed to control our costs. We continue to look for additional ways to lower our costs, but we cannot go much further without reducing or eliminating member benefits and programs which our members have told us are important to them.

## 7. What is ARRL doing to help senior members under financial stress to continue to afford dues and print publications?

ARRL is creating monthly payment options for dues and print magazines for members who are 70-years and older. If you are 70+ years old and need help in this area, please contact Member Services at HQ for details.

## Additional Information

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[Member Bulletin](#) 7/23/2023 | ARRL President Rick Roderick, K5UR, Announces Membership Dues, Effective January 1, 2024

[Dues Survey Results](#) – June 2023  
<http://www.arrl.org/2024-dues-rates>

## Cost of QSL'ing

In July I received this email form Steve KD9HL.

Last week I worked EY7AD in Tajikistan for a 17M band slot. Checking his QRZ page he states for QSLing Registered Mail only. Thinking about it I thought that may be a way to beat the mail thieves.

I then checked with the Post Office on the cost of a Registered Letter to Tajikistan. I just about had to clean out my drawers when I heard the price.

\$1.50-Postage  
\$20.25-Registered Letter Fee  
\$5.65-Return Receipt Fee

Total = \$27.40

Add \$3.00 for the DX's postage and card costs and it comes to a total of \$30.40 for one QSL card!

Then the lady at the Post Office tells me that sending of currency through the mail to Tajikistan is prohibited.

I think I will pass on that card. All of this could be avoided if the DX used Clublog, Paypal or LoTW. He doesn't list an email address, so I don't know of any way to communicate with him.

This can be a very expensive hobby!

Steve  
KD9HL

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## Links and Tidbits.

The Woodpecker Over the Horizon Radar operated by USSR

[https://www.voacap.com/documents/woody\\_woodpecker\\_story\\_pt3\\_VKL.pdf](https://www.voacap.com/documents/woody_woodpecker_story_pt3_VKL.pdf)

4W8X in November 2023 // A team of more than 20 skilled and experienced operators from Germany, Poland, Austria, Hungary and England will be active from Timor Leste in November 2023.

**T2C Tuvalu Expedition to Funafuti October 10-30, 2023**

T88 Palau Short-DXpedition Date: August 29th to September 4th, 2023

1A0C, Sovereign Military Order of Malta. The Order of Malta's Italian Relief Corps (CISOM) will activate the Amateur Radio Station 1A0C between July 26th and August 2nd, from the Magistral Villa on the Aventine (Rome).

August 5 -- Elkhart East Hamfest, Northern Indiana Event Center, 21565 Executive Parkway, Elkhart, <http://elkharteasthamfest.com>, Public Contact: Dewey Thrash K9DEW, Phone: 574-370-2436, Email: [elkharthamfest@gmail.com](mailto:elkharthamfest@gmail.com)



## Question of the Month Answer:

When using WSJT-X, under “DECODE” there is an option to “Enable AP”. What does “AP” mean?

Answer: B. A Priori

“A Priori” signals an assertion that is based on prior knowledge or intuition. In Latin, the term literally means 'from [the] former'. Translated this is a Latin term meaning “**from the cause to the effect.**” A Priori is a term of logic used to denote that when one generally accepted truth is shown to be a cause, another particular effect must necessarily follow.

To put that into plain English it means that the WSJT-X program is using its best guess when decoding a signal. Some may call this artificial intelligence.

Identifying an AP decoded signal is easy. In the “Message” window such signals are followed by a code such as A1, A2 etc.

000415	-11	0.2	1219	~	AG6X PY2GZ GG66	
000415	-17	0.1	490	~	CQ WBON EN34	a1
000415	-7	0.2	1835	~	CQ JASDIM PM64	a1
000415	-22	0.2	1447	~	K7CAR WDOETG FM08	
000415	-6	0.1	2230	~	CO2QU JA1IDQ PM95	
000415	-20	0.2	1695	~	CQ KC2DMC FN21	
000415	-13	0.1	1872	~	3G3G W4CNA R-02	a7
000415	-6	0.3	2007	~	KI5VRF K1GUY RR73	a7
000415	-18	0.1	2104	~	K0KP JA6JNF R-11	a7

For more information, including the meaning of the codes Check out the WSJT-X User Guide Section 12.1 on decoding.

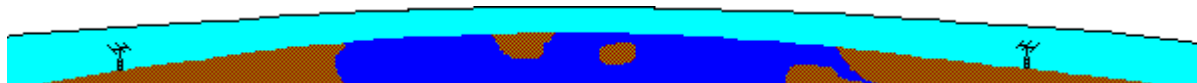
# FOR SALE ITEMS

If you have ham items for sale, email me a list along with prices and contact information. I will put it in the next newsletter.

Let me know when an item is no longer for sale so I can remove it.

For Sale items will be removed from the newsletter after 3 months.

I want to thank those that have been sending in articles for the newsletter. All items are appreciated.



Until Next Time,  
73

*John*

W3ML

President Northwest Indiana DX Club

<http://nwidxclub.weebly.com/>



**DX**



**THANKS**  
*Thanks for visiting!*

