

Northwest Indiana DX CLUB

Volume 12, Issue 12

December 2024

President's Corner

Our next meeting will be in January 2025. Hope to see more of you at the next meeting.

Watch your email for the notice.

73
John W3ML
Good DXing!

Meeting Feb. 9th
12:00 Noon
Sugar Bowl Michigan City

"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 for an appointment or to make other arrangements.

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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@arrl.net

QSL cards are available.

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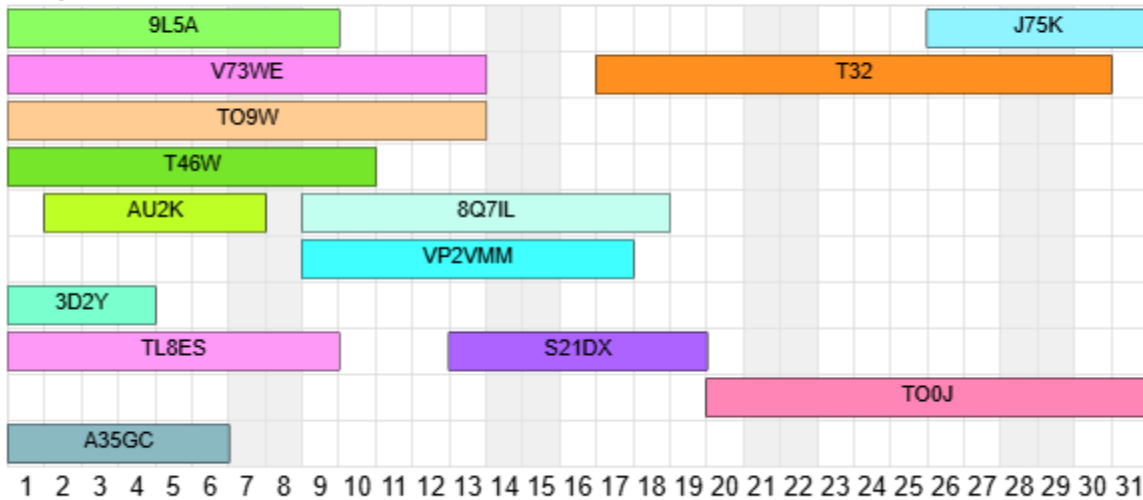
DX LISTINGS
FOR
DECEMBER 2024

By
Jerry Hess, W9KTP



FEATURED DXPEDITIONS TIMELINE

Last update: December 1, 2024



Edited by MM0NDX

DECEMBER

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ANNOUNCEMENT
PRESENTATION BY CARL LUETZELSCHWAB, K9LA
ON
THE SCIENCE OF PROPAGATION

Our fellow member, Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA, has agreed to make a presentation to our club on the subject of the 'Science of Propagation' at our next meeting, probably in January 2025. As most of you are aware, Carl is a noted propagation expert and regularly makes presentations at W9DXCC convention. This will be an exciting subject for all members.

Incidentally, you might want to check out Carl's article in December QST "Worldwide Fun with 100 W and a Dipole".

Hope to see you there.

73's,

Jerry Hess, W9KTP

Question of the Month

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

When did the FCC eliminate the Amateur Novice, Technician Plus and Advanced classes of licenses?

- A. 1995
- B. 2000
- C. 2003
- D. 2010

<Ω>

So, you want to go on a DXpedition?

By Paul Ewing-N6PSE

I am often asked: What's it take to get invited to join a Dxpediton? Or I am told "please keep me in mind for future trips".

Participating in DXpeditions is one of the most enjoyable and interesting things I have ever done. The places that you see and the people that you meet are truly fascinating. You may discover as I have, that our world is truly different than our mass media and biased news reporting would have you believe.

Prior to my first Dxpediton to IRAQ, I always wondered why it was always the same guys on each team that activated these strange and interesting places. Soon, I learned that each team often builds a core part of the team. These team members are often retired or semi-retired and are able to travel with little notice. They also bring other skills to the team such as solid and reliable work ethic, a “can do” attitude, they are likely to be very strong operators and able to operate for long periods of time often under harsh conditions. They are often willing to operate in any mode, any time.

They bring a sense of excitement and adventure that adds to the excitement and passion of the team. Some guys are just hard workers. They know what needs to be done and they just get it done. These guys are the back bone of the team and their skills and knowledge are invaluable.

It is my opinion that each team should have some new talent or new people to introduce to Dxpediton. Dxpediton should not be an elitist function and the hobby benefits from finding and developing new players who can later go on and do more activations and eventually form and lead their own teams. This kind of activity can propel Dxpediton activity for decades to come.

When I am approached by a new comer who wants to join a Dxpediton, I gauge their interest and ability to fit in with a team. I find that sometimes future Dxpeditors have a unrealistic expectation of what a Dxpediton is like. Those that expect comfort and convenience will bring unrealistic expectations to the table. Cost is a consideration for all of us. Today’s Dxpediton can expect to spend \$250-\$500 a day or more plus their cost to get to and from the Dxpediton meeting point.

When building the Dxpediton team, the leaders want to build a team that will be engaged and effective. They will tend to go to their core people first as these people are known for their skills and qualities. The leader knows that he must seek and maintain balance in the skills sets available.

I believe that multi-national teams are the most effective teams at meeting the huge global demand for contacts. For that reason, I prefer to build and assemble a team of US, EU, JA and South American members whenever possible.

I try to tap into the team members feeling of personal obligation to ensure that his own continent is well covered with contacts made. Never do you want to leave a continent feeling that they did not get access to the Dxpediton team.

Strong operating skills are very important to the Dxpediton team. An operator should be strong at CW and/or SSB. Willingness and ability to do multiple modes is a plus. RTTY should not be an afterthought and operators that bring skills such as rapid rate and expertise with multiple decoders are desirable.

Some operators bring extra skills to the team, such as the ability to effectively troubleshoot PC & network issues. Expertise in logging programs such as N1MM, Wintest and Writelog are quite desirable. Skills in gathering log data and performing satellite uploads are very beneficial.

We are often impressed by those that have the right attitude and the aptitude to succeed. Skills can be developed, honed and improved but they must be coupled with the right attitude along with the aptitude to succeed.

There have been countless times when I have been asked “Please keep me in mind for a future trip”. Quite often when I contact those people, I find that they are dreamers and not really engaged in becoming a Dxpeditonier. They are not prepared to take the time away from their work and family or prepared for the cost of the Dxpediton. The men that say “yes” time and time again are able to live the dream and enjoy the fun.

So when you look at the various Dxpediton websites and see the makeup of the team, know that could be you going on the adventure, but only after you have aligned your expectations with those of the team and you have made your skills and abilities attractive to the team leader as he builds and assembles his team.

The future of Dxpeditoning needs new blood. If you wish to join the ranks of DXpeditoniers start getting ready now so that you are prepared to say yes when that call comes.



*Paul Ewing-N6PSE is a frequent contributor to this newsletter. He has been on many DXpeditons both as a member and as the leader. The latest Dxpediton was the **H40WA** Temotu Dxpediton earlier this year.*

A Rock and a Hard Place

Ransomware Attacks

By Bill Salyers – AJ8B

After the recent outage at ARRL Headquarters, I felt like another opinion might be in order.

I am not an ARRL apologist nor am I someone who normally enters the fray just to be heard. However, after reviewing the comments in various locations such as groups.io forums, eHam forums, Facebook comments, and twitter information that has been spread, I felt it was time to at least provide some potential insight surrounding the recent ARRL situation. I have no inside information but quite a bit of knowledge can be gleaned from what was said and what was NOT said. Anyone who thinks that the ARRL took this lightly or were too casual about it doesn't realize what was at stake or the people involved. There are some folks at the league that I have not agreed with, but I never questioned their dedication to the league or the hobby.

I am not a White Hat hacker and not an expert. I have learned things the hard way and then spent considerable time and energy to learn after the fact. In 2019, our company suffered a Ransomware attack at one of our locations shutting down a district office for several days while we dealt with getting 20+ users back online in a way that we felt confident that we could safely move forward.

After putting in our layered defensive scheme, we have received a top rating from our Cyber Insurance provider, been asked to speak at several conferences, and to be a reference for some of the products that we use. If learning the hard way makes you a bit more of an expert, then I am the guy to share some information.

As soon as the ARRL announced that there was an issue with most of the services and systems, one had to conclude that this was a complex and wide-spread attack. As they listed most of the services that had been shut down, LoTW was not on that list. As a very active and popular service, I assumed that some sort of nefarious activity was ongoing such as Ransomware. The idea behind Ransomware is that your files are rendered useless when the attacker applies some sort of encryption to them. Often you can open them, but they are filled with gibberish. You are then contacted by the attackers, either via email or in a pop-up window when you attempt to open an infected file, to supply some sort of payment (typically bitcoin) and the attackers will supply the reverse encryption key. (You hope.)

When we suffered our attack, we immediately contacted our cyber insurance provider for guidance. We had already isolated the office from the rest of our network. Our provider directed us to contact the FBI who assigned a special agent. The first order of business was to minimize our exposure to the public. We were told not to use terms such as Cyber-attack or Ransomware even to our users. We notified our users that we had a network component failure. The FBI's reasoning was simple. The attackers would be less likely to negotiate if they knew the entire picture and knew that they had you "over a barrel." **Rock and a Hard place #1** - presumably the ARRL identified a Ransomware attack and had notified the FBI. I am confident that they were

told not to mention anything about the severity of the attack. So, ARRL members wanted a full and accurate update and the ARRL *could not* provide one lest they compromise their bargaining position. When they ARRL did not give an LoTW update, wild speculation filled the void. Never helpful, but it happens.

The second step involves identifying the attack vector. Was it social engineering? (via email or a text message for instance) Was it a website drive by attack when someone visited a rogue website? Was it something brought in from the outside via a non-approved laptop, tablet, or a USB device? Perhaps a terminated employee was taking revenge!

There is a scarier situation than we have already discussed – what if something that was loaded on to a PC months ago was part of the objects that were backed up back then? Now when you restore from backup, you could be starting all over again. **Rock and a Hard place #2** – All of this takes time. The more time you take, the more frustrated the user community gets – I know, I have been there!

Assuming it is a Ransomware attack, while you are going through the evaluation of how you were attacked, the extent of the attack, and what the state of your backups are, you are also performing a business analysis. I have no idea if a demand was made or what it was, but the average starting demand in 2023 was approximately \$568,000.¹ So now, you are comparing your lost business, functionality, and risk versus the demand. You might set up a test environment and restore your backups to see how quickly you can get things up and running. How stale is the latest backup? Conducting a forced rebuilt is not the time to learn that you no longer have the correct tape drives, backup drives, software, or Code Words!

Rock and a Hard place #3 – Money! It always comes down to money. Most organizations don't have unlimited funds and I am sure that the ARRL is no exception. In fact, with all the anguish and gnashing of teeth that recently occurred during the membership dues increase, the thought of buying new hardware, cloud services, new software, Cyber Engineers etc. would be the last thing on the league's mind.

A practice that some companies employ, is to relegate old servers to the data center. In many cases, a large server running windows will do a find job running UNIX even as the hardware ages. It allows companies to avoid the capital expense that would be needed and is a common practice in non-profit organizations. They are hoping that they will never be a critical point of failure. "If it isn't broke, don't fix it!" Once these servers are set aside for a specific task, they are often neglected. It is easy to see how any company might use old hardware to support a project and then forget about it. Suddenly, it becomes a liability that only shows up during an audit or an attack.

We had one such server that we had to physically remove from the network. The software that ran on it was



This says it all

used by our HR department and the last version of Windows server that it could run on was Server 2007! That is no longer supported and is a huge liability. Once we identified the issue, we took it completely off the network and mothballed it.

As I mentioned, I have no inside knowledge of what the league was facing. I do know that these problems are complex, difficult, and are not aided by sages and experts who seem to know better. As I mentioned, I am not an apologist but I thought another viewpoint my help clarify what the league may have been going through.

Your thoughts and input are appreciated via the Groups.IO groups ARRL-Groups and LOTW-groups.

See you in the pileups.

¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1409510/ransom-payment-us-quarterly-amount/>

This article is printed with the permission of the author, Bill Salyers-AJ8B. Bill is an avid DX'er with 339 entitles confirmed. He is also the President of the Southwest Ohio DX Association. He can be reached at aj8b@arrl.net

Connecting to W9PA Clusters

To connect to:

W9PA-4 - Skimmer & All Hand Entered Spots - telnet:\\dx.w9pa.net:7373

W9PA-5 - Skimmer Generated FT4/FT8 Spots - telnet:\\dx.w9pa.net:7374

73 ---> Dave, W9PA

Question of the Month Answer:

When did the FCC eliminate the amateur Novice, Technician Plus and Advanced classes of licenses?

Answer: B. 2000

In 1951, the FCC reorganized the Amateur licensing structure, calling it Incentive Licensing. There were six classes of license that an Amateur could hold; Novice, Technician, General, Conditional, Advanced, and Amateur Extra:

The Novice Class license was the entry level license, with a 5-wpm code requirement (Element 1A) and a written test (Element 2). The Novice Class had CW operating privileges in the HF bands. Originally, the Novice Class license was issued for a term of one year, and could not be

renewed (you had to upgrade, or lose your privileges), later raised to five years (renewable), and eventually to the current renewable ten-year license term.

The Technician Class license, had a more difficult written test (Element 3), which added all operating privileges in the bands above 30 MHz. Operators were required to possess a Novice Class license as prerequisite, to test for this license. This license was issued for five years (renewable), and eventually to the current renewable ten-year license term. In 1987, the FCC replaced the (Element 3) exam with the (Element 2) exam as a requirement to hold this license. In 1991, the FCC created the current No-Code Technician Class license. During 1994, the FCC started referring to Technician Class licensees, who also possessed a Novice Class license (and therefore had HF privileges), as Technician Plus licensees.

The General Class license had the same (Element 3) exam as the Technician Class license, and with a requirement to pass Element 1B, a 13 wpm code test. This license was issued for a five-year term (renewable), and eventually to the current renewable ten year license term.

The Conditional Class was a conversion of what was then called Class “C”. Existing Class “C” licensees were awarded this license. The Conditional Class could be converted to a General Class license, by taking an upgrade examination at an FCC office. In 1978, the FCC eliminated this class of license, and all existing licensees were converted into General Class licensees. This license was issued for a five-year term (renewable). The class was eliminated in 1978.

The Advanced Class license was a new class under the Incentive Program. The requirements to hold this license were to hold a General Class license, and pass the Element 4A exam. This license was issued for a five-year term (renewable), and eventually to the current renewable ten-year license term.

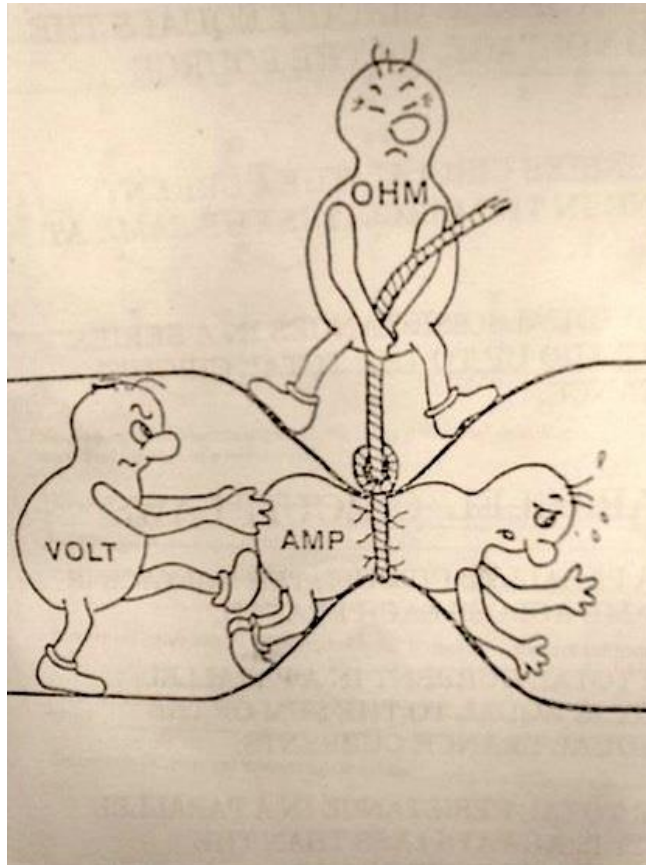
The FCC created the Amateur Extra Class license. The requirements to hold this license were to hold an Advanced Class license, and pass the Element 4B exam and pass Element 1C, a code test at 20 wpm. This license was issued for a five-year term (renewable), and eventually to the current renewable ten-year license term.

The issuing of Novice licenses, along with Advanced and Technician Plus classes, was halted after the FCC simplified licensing on April 15, 2000, reducing the number of classes to today's familiar three: Technician, General, and Amateur Extra. Hams who hold licenses in deleted classes can renew these licenses in perpetuity.

The Morse Code requirement was eliminated for Technician-class licensees in 1991, and for all license classes in 2007.



Ohm's Law



This says it all!

FOR SELL ITEMS

FREE Astron LS-10A 28 VOLT DC POWER SUPPLY. No shipping. Power Supply Weight: 18.00 lbs. Contact John, W3ML



For Sale, Cushcraft A3S tri-band HF Yagi, 10, 15 and 20 meters, with the 30/40 meter add-on.

This antenna is just over 2 years old. It worked fine for me, but I soon realized I needed coverage for more bands (WARC) so I replaced it with a new 5 band Yagi. This A3S is in great shape and the price is very good. Look up this antenna now and it is \$799 at DX Engineering for the basic tri-band antenna only, add the A-743 30/40 meter add on and that's an additional \$349, that's \$1200 today, plus you have to pay for shipping and tax, likely \$1400 or more when all is said and done. My price to you, at almost 1/3 the cost of a new one is \$500, or make me an offer. I'll deliver no charge within the NWI region, or you can pick up in La Porte, IN. Its a great tri-band, or 5 band when you add the 30/40 meter add-on.

**Contact me if interested,
Bill, N4SV,
wbs099@yahoo.com**

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!

