

Northwest Indiana DX CLUB

Volume 11, Issue 3

March 2023

President's Corner

March 18th

The Meeting will be on March 18th.
Jerry has invited a speaker.
Time is NOON. Same place in
Chesterton. Round the Clock.

If you have something you would like
to present, please let me know.

Happy DX! Bands are opening up
nicely.

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 for an
appointment or to make other
arrangements.

<i>Northwest Indiana DX Club Officers and Staff</i>			
President	W3ML	John Poindexter	w3ml.ohn@gmail.com
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Webmaster	W9YOU	John Reardon	kd9ron@ARRL.net
ARRL Card Checker	KD9HL	Steve Mollman	kd9hl@ARRL.net

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@arrrl.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.

New Club CHALLENGE Ends on March 17th.

The new contest is to work 5 EU, 5 SA and 5 Canadian Provinces. This should not be difficult with major contests like CQWW, ARRL DX, and Sweepstakes in the coming months.

Contest starts after the meeting on November 12, 2022.

Send your report to w3ml.john@gmail.com

5 EU, 5 SA and 5 Canadian Provinces

Log would be like:

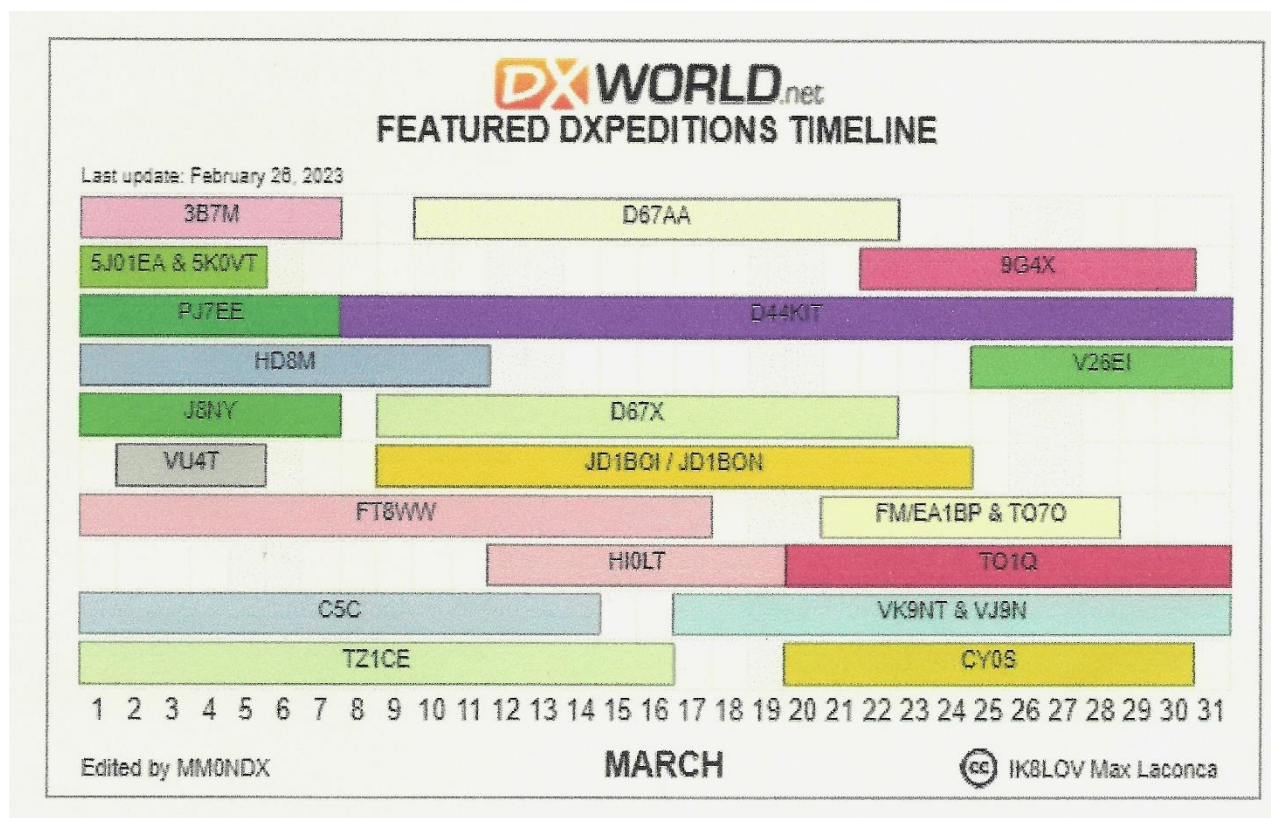
Your Name/Call	Date	Time Call	Band	Mode	Location
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The Question of the Month

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

What is the name of the vessel used on the recent 3Y0J-Bouvet Expedition?

- A. **Mama Mia**
 - B. **Marama**
 - C. **Mariana**
 - D. **Matilda**
-



Is There a “Black Hole”?

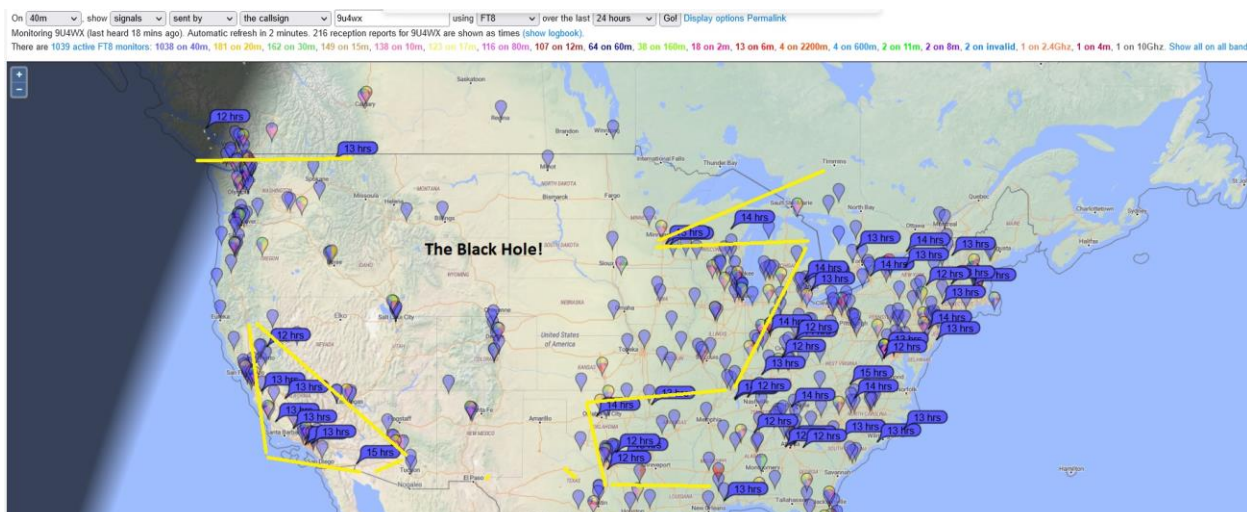
What do you think?

By Steve Mollman-KD9HL

We Midwestern DX'ers often blame our lack of success on being located in the “**Black Hole**”. Black Hole refers to an area where the propagation is weak or non-existent. This results in our inability to make DX contacts. Especially contacts with rare or semi rare stations.

Recently, 9U4WX-Burundi was working DX on 40-meter ft8. Although we in Northwest Indiana could see many stations East of the Indiana-Ohio state line and in California working the African station, we couldn't hear him, let alone work him. If you can't hear them, you can't work them.

A look at PSKReporter revealed an ugly picture. Nobody from the Indiana-Ohio state line to California was hearing the DX! A **Black Hole**?



The propagation gurus will say that this is a normal occurrence with signals “skipping” as they take multiple hops around the world. A DX’er living in the affected area will probably call it the curse of the “**Black Hole**”. There is a reason the masthead of this newsletter includes the phrase “Working the World from the **Black Hole**”! Is the **Black Hole** real? What do you think?

Ω

Handy Hint

AAA Battery for an AA Device

By Steve Mollman-KD9HL

Did the AA batteries in your device suddenly die and you don’t have any replacements? Substitute AAA batteries. Wad up some aluminum foil and place it between the battery and the spring so that it fits snugly. Then insert your AAA batteries. It is that simple.

Alkaline batteries from AAA size up to D cells have the same operating voltage. This means non-rechargeable batteries like these all offer 1.5 volts of power, so there’s no electrical reason you can’t use them interchangeably—they just won’t physically fit right into the battery slot in your device. That’s where the tinfoil comes in: it allows the battery to fit snugly in place while still conducting electricity.

An alternative to aluminum foil is that you can buy battery adapters that turn [AAA batteries into AAs](#), or even [D cells](#). These are better than aluminum foil as they facilitate more stable physical contact.

Before and After Being Installed



Search Amazon for “*Battery Adapter Converter for AAA to AA Battery*”.

There is a small downside to this hint—the lifespan. Devices powered with a smaller battery just don’t run as long as they would when using a right-sized juice source, simply because smaller cells store a smaller amount of energy.

<Ω>

Do you have a Handy Hint that you would like to share? Contact Steve Mollman at KD9HL@ARRL.net

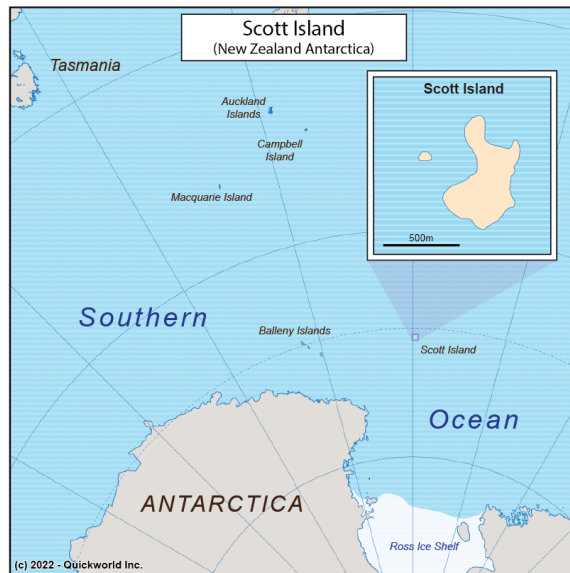
SELECTED ARRL COMMITTEE REPORTS

By

Jerry Hess, W9KTP

As mentioned in the article about Carl Luetzelschwab and his duties as a Director, the ARRL Committees do the major function of the League. Since our club’s main focus is DXing and to some degree Contesting, I chose the most recent reports from the DX Advisory Committee and the Contest Advisory Committee. I did abbreviate the original reports to save space in the Newsletter. Conclusions or emphasis are in bold and my clarification are in red.

Before the actual report two pieces of information might be helpful. I had not heard of Balleny and Scott Island so I found a map of their location. Also, I researched 4U1A and found it was a Vienna, Austria club. 4U1ITU is also located in Vienna.



DX Advisory Committee Report

The DXAC met via Zoom on Sunday October 2, 2022 at 7:00pm EST (2300 UTC)

In attendance (15): K4MQG (Gary), NI0G (Udo), K5TF (Dick), K7BTW (Dick), N4JQQ (Steve), AC8W (Stan), **K9LA (Carl)**, K5UR (Rick), W1YRC (Bob), W5OV (Bob), **K9EL (John)**, K2CS (Chris), N5OK (Coy), W0VTT (Mike), K2XA (Saul)

Results

1. Balleny & Scott Island entity status

A brief discussion of the status of the 4U1A and Balleny & Scott Island requests was held and it was determined that as the rules stand today, neither qualify for DXAC entity status. **The DXAC felt that these items have been properly addressed and no further consideration should be given (unless otherwise directed) to either 4U1A or Balleny & Scott Islands.** (References to DXCC rules omitted)

Later in the meeting, a question was raised as to the history of the 60th degree South rule and its application to what the DXCC Rules deem an entity. Also, mention was made of DXCC Section II, Rule 3b, Separation by Water, and how the distances were derived. The distance was carefully chosen to add a small number of countries to the DXCC

list. At that time, it was felt that making the distances much shorter would add too many countries and that would be detrimental to DXCC.

2. VADXCC petition to suspend inactive entities and/or reconsider Honor Roll Threshold

A discussion was held on the recent VADXCC petition asking for a review (and possible deletion) of inactive countries. Many felt unintended consequences may occur if there were any deletions (or considerations for inactivity). There was a suggestion to evaluate the possibility of an inactive status; one that would take into account the amount of time an entity had not been active. Even though retained on the overall county list, the entity would be made “inactive” for honor roll (and other) purposes. Questions were raised as to the retention of credit for previously worked entities if their status became “inactive”. Though these scenarios were discussed, it was ultimately the feeling of the group that the Honor Roll was at the pinnacle of the DX aspect of the hobby and that its achievement is one of “years of work” and it should not be diminished due to what appears to be a minority of operators being unable to achieve it. The same feeling was generally held with any attempt to add countries if they do not fit current criteria (to satisfy the need for new ones particularly for those who have “worked them all”). Granted, there was no disagreement in the excitement generated by a new entity. **The DXAC determination is no further consideration should be given to this petition.**

3. Return of RTTY only DXCC Award

Regarding a separate RTTY award, several members had polled clubs and other interested parties in their areas and the majority reported that those organizations were in favor of a separate, RTTY only award. It was noted that almost all current RTTY contacts are generated by digital means. Comments also included the difficulty in attaining RTTY contacts outside of contests (possibly lending credence to a separate award). The DXAC has determined additional consideration should be given to this request (and that the CAC (**Contest Advisory Committee**) should be advised of this consideration as well).

4. Additional DXCC Award suggestions

As for additional DXCC awards, it was determined that there are currently over 20 different DXCC honors, based on an entity confirmation by band, mode and other criteria. Adding additional awards was thought to have no effect on DXCC program participation or in increasing ARRL membership (or retention). **The DXAC has determined there is no need for further consideration of this item at this time.**

One phenomenon that was an item of interest was the explosive increase in FT8 and the possible need to pay further attention to the popularity of that mode. A dramatic increase in LOTW activity is directly related to the use of FT8. Most current DX contacts are being initiated digitally as opposed to traditional modes (such as CW, SSB or RTTY). Interest in the “computer” as a part of ham radio would seem to be the path of the future.

5. DXCC Card Checker guidelines, rules adjustments considerations

The DXCC Card Checker question was answered by several reflector replies and is not really open for interpretation.

6. Thoughts on DXCC 2025

In closing, the thought of a DXCC 2025 review was mentioned. Acknowledging the work performed 25 years ago, is there a need for reevaluation of those findings? Is the DXCC program healthy or are there ways we can “update” it? Or is there even a need to do as such? There certainly is a time and resource commitment and nothing was ultimately decided but the DXAC agreed that there should be further discussion on the matter at this time. It is likely that in 2023, a DXAC meeting will open this up for discussion.

The DXAC meeting closed at 8:34pm EST (0034 UTC)

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Shalvoy K2CS – Chairman, ARRL DXAC

Contest Advisory Committee Report

Overview

In the last six months, the CAC has met online to review changes to rules. We have considered several ideas and made progress on task list items. Most of our discussions take place online in our discussion group. A 90-minute Zoom meeting was held December 7, 2022 that prepared us for our presentation to the PSC (**Program and Services Committee**). Our CAC members report our activities to their respective board members. Our liaison to the PSC is Bill, AC0W and he is kept updated, monitors our discussions and updates CAC on PSC actions. Many of the following tasks were presented and moved forward by the PSC.

CAC Membership:

- Atlantic – Charles D. Fulp, Jr, K3WW; k3ww@fast.net
 - **Central – Craig Thompson, K9CT; Craig@k9ct.us (Chairman)**
 - Dakota – Jon Platt, W0ZQ; W0ZQ@AOL.com
 - Delta – Stan Stockton, K5GO; wa5rtg@gmail.com
 - Great Lakes – Dan Kovatch, W8CAR; w8car@bex.net
 - Hudson – Zev Darack, N2WKS; zevdarack@gmail.com
 - Midwest – Dr. Glenn Johnson, W0GJ; w0gj@arrl.net
 - New England – Rudy Bakalov, N2WQ; r_bakalov@yahoo.com
 - Northwestern – Jim Cassidy, KI7Y; ki7y@arrl.net
 - Pacific – Jim Brown, K9YC; K9YC@arrl.net
 - Roanoke - Don Daso, K4ZA; k4za@juno.com
-

- Rocky Mountain – Darryl Hazelgren, K7UT; darryl@hazelgren.net
- Southeastern – Charles Wooten, NF4A; NF4A@knology.net
- Southwestern – Glenn Rattmann, K6NA; k6na59@gmail.com
- West Gulf – James K. George, N3BB; n3bb@mindspring.com
- Radio Amateurs of Canada – Samuel A. Ferris, VE5SF; ve5sf@sasktel.net

VHF CAC Subcommittee

Jon Platt W0ZQ (Subcommittee Chair), **Craig Thompson K9CT**, Jeff Ach W2FU, Rus Healy K2UA, Steve Kostro N2CEI, Bob Striegl K2DRH, John Kalenowsky K9JK, Jim Duffey KK6MC, Eric Olson, N7EPD

Recent Considerations:

The CAC spent most of the last few months discussing the Limited Antenna proposal. All members seemed to be in favor of this “overlay” until we got to the definition of these antennas. Many iterations of the definitions were hashed about but as we concluded, we united behind a simple definition. We decided that this overlay should apply to all ARRL contests and the IARU if possible. “Limited Antennas Overlay: Operation is limited to the use of single element antennas having no more intentional directivity than a single vertical, an end-fed wire, or a single dipole. The antenna(s) may cover multiple bands, as in the case of multiband verticals and dipoles with fan or trap construction. All antennas shall be no more than 50 feet above ground at their highest point. [The intent of this overlay is to recognize and encourage participation from stations where more capable antennas are restricted by their location.]” A Form 5.1 for this proposal has been submitted via our liaison Bill, AC0W for the next PSC meeting in January.

The 10 GHz and Up contest rules have not yet been announced on the contest website. These rules were approved by PSC in April, 2022. <https://contests.arrl.org/ContestRules/10-GHz-Rules.pdf>

The idea of distributed multi multi was proposed as an extension of its use during the pandemic. There was a discussion by the CAC members online but no consensus would be reached to this.

The VHF subcommittee proposed the Enhanced Gavel program to encourage the club’s participation in the January, June and September VHF contests. The CAC supported this proposal and forwarded it to PSC in October. This has yet to be announced by the HQ staff and should be done as soon as possible for 2023. We were asked to discuss the gavel program in general and we have not done so to date but will take up this issue in the next quarter.

One great discussion occurred regarding letting DX work each other in the ARRL 160 Meter Contest similar to the 10 Meter Contest. This will probably resurface again when we start to

discuss these issues again. The opinion was that allowing DX to work each other in the contest would lead to more activity for everyone in the contest. There was some discussion about the geographic advantages that east coast has over the west coast but no idea was forthcoming to solve that problem.

Another idea proposed was to shorten the 160m contest because the recent contest had so much activity in the first 24 hours and how it slowed so much in the last 24 hours. We discussed this as it relates to SS (**SweepStakes**) also. No consensus could be derived from this discussion at this time.

We revisited the new Unlimited category that included social media and self-spotting. The ARRL HQ team has reviewed all the rules and removed any language about self-spotting. The ARRL SS Phone contest was the first real test of this new rule and there was no negative feedback in any of the forums. Bob, W5OV has since publicly stated the ARRL position on this subject in the public forums.

The VHF subcommittee presented a recommendation to the CAC for VHF Contest Rule improvements and the CAC has forwarded these to the PSC for their approval.

A. Single Operator, FM-Only. The current VHF contest rules allow the use of only the four lowest bands; 50, 144, 222, and 432 MHz. While this operating category accounts for only about one or two percent of all VHF contest logs, it is a viable operating category particularly for Technician operators who themselves account for nearly half of all licensed operators. Use of FM on 903 and 1296 MHz is regionally popular as are operating activities that often employ FM such as Summits On The Air. Finally, new products and emerging technologies has increased the ability to access UHF and microwave bands. Based on this it is recommended that the 902 and 1296 bands be added to the SOFM Only operating category so that this operating category covers 50 through 1296 MHz.

B. Rovers and club scores: VHF contest rule VCAT.5.3.5 requires that a rover that operates outside of their club's territory submit a secondary summary sheet indicating the portion of their score that counts for the club score if any of the QSOs submitted take place outside of their club's territory. Not only is this rule burdensome for all parties it also limits rover activity for local clubs given their smaller club territory. It is recommended that this rule be changed to state that for a rover's score to be included in a club's score that the rover must have made contacts from somewhere within the club's territory during the course of the contest (i.e., with no secondary summary sheet required). This would include rover scores submitted for Large, Medium and Local size clubs.

C. Minimum Distance: While continuing to allow fixed stations that operate close to each other to make contest contacts (for example city based "neighbors"), contest contacts should take place over at least a minimum distance that is respective of the technology, improves operating skills, and that is reflective of the intent of weak signal VHF+ contesting. Currently, general rule STTN.6 states: "While no minimum distance is specified for contacts,

equipment should be capable of communications at a range of at least 1 km". It is recommended that general rule STTN.6 be modified to read as follows: All equipment must be capable of communications at a range of at least 5 km. Contacts made between non-fixed stations, for example portable and/or rover stations, must be made over a distance of at least 5 km.

This completed our work through December, 2022

VHF Subcommittee/CAC:

The VHF Subcommittee is a very active committee and meets at least once a month via Zoom. In the last 6 months they have forwarded proposals to the CAC for their recommendation to the PSC. Both proposals were approved by the CAC for advancement.

There was considerable time spent discussing Rovers, Distance Scoring, Hybrid Scoring, and June VHF. Consensus was built around some of the ideas and they became the proposals to the CAC.

Recently we have turned to discussing the ideas around a new VHF contest that may replace or combine existing contests. The outcome is to increase participation and fun for the VHF contester. We are early in the process and no conclusions can be drawn.

Jon, W0ZQ has led this committee and kept them focused on the process. The VHF committee reports their work to the CAC on a regular basis.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the ARRL Contest Advisory Committee

Craig Thompson, CAC Chairman

A Product Review

Yoctosun Head Mount Illuminated Magnifier

By Steve Mollman-KD9HL



There are several things that have been happening in my electronics world over the years. First the components have been getting steadily smaller and second as I have aged, my eyesight capabilities have diminished. A bad combination that causes problems when attempting even small projects.

While at my doctor for a routine exam, I noticed he was wearing a strange looking contraption and using it for closeup looks. I asked him about it and he allowed me to try them on. This was an “aha” moment! A solution to the problem of working on those tiny components. Not only did it magnify, it had tiny built in adjustable LED lights for illuminating the area being worked on. I knew I had to get one.

There are many different examples for sale and I chose the Yoctosun. It had good reviews and the price was at the low end.

The Yocotosun has five interchangeable lenses with 1.0X, 1.5X, 2.0X, 2.5X, 3.5X magnification. It also has two angle adjustable LED lights powered by 3 AAA batteries and the option of using ear pieces or a headband.



After using the Magnifier for several months, I can say that I am generally satisfied. It provides an “hands free” aid to performing those delicate soldering and construction jobs.

The interchangeable lenses come in a plastic storage case. Magnifying strengths of 1.0X, 1.5X, 2.0X, 2.5X, 3.5X. My experience is that the 1.5X and 2.0X are the most useful. The 3.5X required being too close to the work for a proper focus (about 2 inches). Individual preferences may vary. The lenses can be flipped up as required.

I have used the earpieces exclusively as they allowed the quick donning and removal as required. They fit comfortably over my eyeglasses however I found it was easier to find a proper focus with my eyeglasses removed. The headband option, while not difficult, is slightly more cumbersome.

The plastic construction seems to be sturdy enough to provide a trouble-free service life. The only maintenance required is to keep the lenses clean and replace the batteries as needed. The manufacturer estimates the battery life to be well over 20 hours.

This is a product of China.

The Yoctosun is available from Amazon for about \$18.00 a pair. (Apparently the same product is available under various names at different prices-shop carefully for the best bargain).



Question of the Month Answer:

What is the name of the vessel used on the recent 3Y0J-Bouvet Expedition?

C. Marama

The MARAMA is a Sailing Yacht, designed by Dominique Presles, and built by the N2A shipyard in St Nazaire, France under the control of Bureau Véritas. Specifically, it is a ketch. Its length is 101 feet with a beam of 21 feet and draws 11 feet of water.

The yacht Marama has an [aluminum](#) hull and [aluminum](#) superstructure. She is powered by [a John Deere](#) engine, which give her a cruising speed of 10.0 kn and a top speed of 12.0 kn. The yacht has a speed of 10.0 kn. The yacht carries 3,000 liters of fuel on board, and 15,008 liters of water.

[Marama \(mythology\)](#) is a widespread Polynesian word for 'moon' or 'light'. It is could also be the name of a Cook Island lunar deity. It is sometimes used as a girl's name.

**So I bought a new transceiver
and she asked...**



**“Are you going to sell any of
your old ones?”**

Jurgen, did your wife ask you this after the hamcation?

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

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



DX

