



Beginner's Classroom

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This column attempts to explain some aspect of our hobby each month. The subjects may be technical or they may concern such things as DX practices and traditions. Suggestions for topics are always welcome.

BEGINNER'S CLASSROOM FOR NOVEMBER 2009

SOME (New?) THINGS TO TRY

For many years I have written columns about many different aspects of our radio hobby, while trying to have fellow hobbyists try something different from their usual listening pursuits. This has included listening to scanners, trying to DX Longwave and looking at "out of band" experiences in shortwave listening. This month's column is about some different **approaches** in how we listen, as well as when and where we listen.

Listening to AM or FM in the Car

I've had the opportunity lately to be in my car a few evenings this past month and I decided to turn the mediumwave dial as I travelled. In one hour during one of my travels I had tuned in Detroit (WJR-760), Boston (WBZ-1030), New York (WABC-770, WCBS-880), Philadelphia (KYW-1060, WPHT-1210), Baltimore (WBAL-1090), Chicago (WGN-720) – the powerhouse MW stations in the USA. Another evening my wife and I were returning to eastern Scarborough from southwestern Ontario, and listened to a number of local FM stations that we do not receive in the Toronto area. This can be an enjoyable pastime when travelling as you get the opportunity to hear local DJs and newscasts, as well as get to know what type of musical genres are the favourites of the area. There may even be the wonderful opportunity to hear some DX on the FM dial if the propagation conditions are amenable.

Listening to SW outside when there is good weather

In good, sunny summer weather I like to take a portable receiver outside for the afternoon or evening, string out a longwire antenna, and do some DXing and program listening on shortwave. (*Ed. Note: Yes, I know, I know, we didn't really have very many "good, sunny summer weather" days this year. However, the two sunny days we had were well spent doing this activity!*) You may find it relaxing being able to tune in your favourite SW program while sitting outside under a tent, pergola or umbrella. It is a great way to enjoy your backyard or balcony while working at your favourite hobby.

Looking at websites such as www.shortwave.be

Many websites have been mentioned in the past ten to fifteen years in *Listening In* columns. I've chosen one that hasn't been mentioned (as far as I can remember) so that you might be curious enough to point your web browser to a new listening site. Ludo Maes' site gives a listing of major shortwave broadcasters by country, using the categories of government, religious, commercial, pirate, clandestine, non-profit and time

signal stations. When you've chosen a category, a page pops up with shortwave broadcasters in alpha order by country and then station(s) within that country. Clicking on a specific station takes you to the website of that broadcaster. There are many wonderful sites that can be accessed on the Internet – read Richard Cuff's monthly column **Click!** to get more information about broadcaster sites.

Visiting a radio station

I have not personally visited many radio stations over the years, but I have been to the CBC building and studios in downtown Toronto, and (way) back in 1975 I went to the HEW building in Washington, D.C. to visit the Voice of America. The visit to the VOA was of particular importance to me, as in the 1970s it was difficult to get the Voice of America to send program schedules to listeners from the United States (where I was living at the time). A personal visit was all it took to get a number of program schedules from the VOA, and I've never forgotten their welcoming attitude and "goodies" that were usually reserved for people listening from abroad. If you ever get the opportunity to visit SW, MW and/or FM stations, you'll find it a very interesting and rewarding experience.

I apologize that this column contains many first-hand personal experiences. I thought it was the best and most compact way to relate what else can be done in the listening hobby besides sitting in the shack with the headphones planted. If you have any personal experiences that gave you a different perspective on our wonderful hobby, please pass them along and I'll print them in a future Classroom.

One last apology... I had forgotten when writing last month's Classroom that **Passport to World Band Radio** may not be publishing this year. It is my firm wish that Larry Magne and his **PWBR** team will be able to continue the dissemination of shortwave radio info in some form. The plethora of articles, reviews, charts and of course the famous blue pages have always been a boon to shortwave listeners everywhere. My thanks go out to Mark Coady who reminded me of **PWBR** not publishing this autumn.

Until December, Standard Time, Christmas/Hanukkah seasons and the cold, snowy weather returning,

73, keep smiling and keep listening

J O E