



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 OCTOBER, 2009

Books and Periodicals for Shortwave Listening

It's October throughout the world, and Fall/Autumn in the Northern Hemisphere, which turns a shortwave listener's/DXer's mind to longer nights and better shortwave listening. This month we take a look at some of the printed manuals, periodicals, annuals and books to help us in our listening hobby.

The first two "books" are actually annuals that are worthwhile in one's SWL endeavours. These two classic annual references, **Passport To World Band Radio** and **The World Radio TV Handbook**, have been mentioned in this column many times. PWBR arrives in September-October each year and includes receiver reviews, timely articles, what and when to hear SW stations, and the famous "blue pages" which list each shortwave frequency, who is broadcasting on it, in what language, when and from which transmitter site. WRTH usually arrives about the end of January of each year and lists domestic shortwave, mediumwave, FM, TV and international broadcasts by country. WRTH and PWBR also give some station information such as addresses, transmitters, QSL info, schedules and the like.

Although written over fifteen years ago, the **Shortwave Listening Guidebook** by Harry Helms is one of the best sources of basic information on many topics. Harry talks about receivers and antennas, major broadcasters (although some have changed since his writing), standard frequency and time stations, propagation on the various SW bands, obtaining QSLs and much, much more. I find this book very readable and can be understood by anyone in the radio listening hobby.

For those who like to listen to signals different from domestic and international SW broadcasts, the **2009/2010 Guide to Utility Radio Stations** may be of interest. This is the 25th edition in a series that gives aircraft, maritime, governmental and military stations that operate in various modes on the shortwave bands. Compiled by Joerg Klingenfuss, this book is perhaps the best in its field for utility radio listening.

Another book by Joerg Klingenfuss is the **Shortwave Frequency Guide (2009)**. According to Universal radio, "this book covers the latest 2009 schedules of all clandestine, domestic, and international broadcast stations, compiled by a team of international experts assisted by more than 100 experienced collaborators and monitors

worldwide. It features a giant broadcast frequency list with 10,000 entries, and a superb alphabetical list of stations as well. Another 10,000 abbreviated entries cover utility stations worldwide from the international bestseller **2009/2010 Guide to Utility Radio Stations.**”

There are still a number of periodicals that either are explicitly or implicitly tied to shortwave listening. Among them are:

Monitoring Times – This monthly magazine is an excellent source of advice and information. There are a number of columns within this periodical that pertain to shortwave listening. Among them are *The Shortwave Guide*, *The QSL Report*, *The Global Forum* and, of course, our own Fred Waterer’s column entitled *Programming Spotlight*. Go to www.monitoringtimes.com for more info on how to subscribe or where to buy the magazine.

Popular Communications – PopComm, as some call it, also has some wonderful articles and log lists that pertain to the shortwave listener or DXer. If you’d like to know more about this magazine that appears on many newsstands and in a number of bookstores, contact www.popular-communications.com.

Practical Wireless and RadioUser -- These two British publications are excellent sources of news on the shortwave scene. At one time, a British magazine called Short Wave Magazine combined with another radio publication called Radio Active to create this new monthly called RadioUser. These magazines are sometimes hard to get in North America (The old Short Wave Magazine was easier to obtain), but you can go to the website of www.pwpublishing.ltd.uk to find out how to subscribe. I remember reading through a number of the old SW Magazines thanks to Michael Murray, and was always impressed with the articles and information contained within the periodical.

There are a number of other publications out there for SW listeners and DXers, including some club-based printed and electronic magazines and books. If there’s one that is of particular importance to you, drop me a line and I will write about it in a future column.

I must apologize for a blatant error in my *Helping Hand* column for September. I spoke of the coming Vernal Equinox, when I should have called it the Autumnal Equinox. Anyway, as I write this column, it is the first day of Autumn in the Northern hemisphere (September 22nd), and it is warm, muggy and quite humid... a sharp contrast to the cooler summer we’ve had here in Ontario. Oh well, maybe the weather is just like propagation conditions on shortwave – ever changing, ever surprising, but never quite predictable.

Until November,
73, keep smiling and keep listening
JOE