



## Programming Matters – July 2009

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*Programming is what we listen to on shortwave and this column presents and discusses programs. The presenters of these programs and the stations they speak from are also topics for coverage. We also delve into many other topics to see how radio impacts our lives.*

### Quote of the Month

“Truth is the best propaganda and lies are the worst. To be persuasive we must be believable; to be believable we must be credible; to be credible we must be truthful. It is as simple as that.” Edward R. Murrow, USIA, during the 1960s  
[http://www.franzbleeker.de/radio\\_voa\\_cri\\_1984\\_2008.html](http://www.franzbleeker.de/radio_voa_cri_1984_2008.html)

### Canada

This was buried in the middle of an article about the Inuit seal hunt...

### Northern way of life is ancient

“Thanks to satellites, what goes on in the Arctic is now only a second or two away from our television sets. Yet before satellites and less than 50 years ago, the northern regions were isolated and totally dependent on themselves during the long winter months. As an indication of just how isolated they were, in the 1950s and '60s the CBC's shortwave service's 50-kilowatt transmitters in Sackville transmitted a regular northern shortwave service to all northern communities such as Rankin Inlet, Pangnirtung, Igloolik and Cambridge Bay.

“Part of that service included current news and other events. Yet, since mail only arrived in early summer with the supply boat, those who grew up in southern Canada and were now living and working in the north were often desperate during those long winter months for news of their loved ones in the south.

“At that time the CBC did indeed have a heart, to the extent that part of the northern shortwave service transmissions included the announcer reading letters

from those in the south to their relatives and friends in the north. This included news such as births, deaths, who had gotten married, had an accident, found a job, what mom and dad or sister were doing, who was in hospital, etc., all very much appreciated by those in the far north who were clustered around their shortwave receiver sets. But times change and much is forgotten that should not be.”

<http://timestranscript.canadaeast.com/sports/article/686291>

Ecuador

Vozandes Media flies new flag

Posted: 23 June, 2009

Ecuador (MNN) — After 55 years, a German radio ministry is sailing under a new flag and a new name.

Vozandes Media is the new name of the HCJB Global Voice German Language Service (GLS). It still broadcasts from Ecuador, but now it works under HCJB Global's World Office in Germany rather than under its Latin America region.

In addition, Ecuador legally recognized Vozandes Media's status as a non-governmental organization at the beginning of June. The ministry is also enjoying new office space.

"I believe that the GLS is one of the few departments which used the same office space for 43 years," said Horst Rosiak, who heads Vozandes Media.

Due to the opening of an international airport near HCJB's antennas, German and Low-German shortwave broadcasts to the Americas are scheduled to end in 2010. Digital shortwave broadcasts reach Europe and the Americas.

Vozandes Media also reaches Europe through satellite and through a service called Phoneraster. Europeans can dial a certain telephone number and choose from a variety of German-language programs. The most popular program is in Low German.

Listeners may also download podcasts over the internet. HCJB Global receives responses to its German-language programs from 60 different countries.

The programs began in 1953 when Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services established the German Service, constructing the department's offices at the station 13 years later in 1966.

Today, it broadcasts 14 hours of programming to Europe, South America, and the South Pacific every week under the name Die Stimme der Anden (Voice of the Andes).

<http://www.mnnonline.org/article/12830>

## Honduras Coup

As this column was being finished, came word that a coup has apparently taken place in Honduras. I read an early report via the AP (Reuters?), which told me very little about the coup...whether it was right wing, left wing, or why there was a coup at all, which left me very dissatisfied. Glenn Hauser was on top of the story, here are some of his preliminary reports.

“Radio Habana Cuba con emisión especial para Honduras, el domingo 28 de junio alrededor de las 1600 TU, mejor en 13750, también en 17750, 13680, 12010, frecuencias habituales de Aló, Presidente cuando funciona Chávez (Glenn Hauser, OK, DX LISTENING DIGEST) Véase mi reporte en inglés

“The DentroCubans are convinced the CIA --- now Obama`s CIA --- is behind the coup, immediately drawing parallels with Guatemala and Chile. Geez, give the República Bananera de Honduras some credit for being able to stage its own coups without the US necessarily being involved! That`s what Manuel Zelaya gets for trying to reform the constitution so he could remain president-for-life, à la Hugo Chávez. So he lands in Costa Rica --- wonder if the ex-University for Peace, converted into a university for war, had anything to do with it?

“At 1555 UT the Mesa Redonda adjourned for lunch, to resume at 2 pm (1800 UT), music fill until 13750 went off without further announcement at 1700. Since it`s a domestic radio/TV program, RHC may or may not resume the SW relay at a time when it is not normally on the air at all, but check the usual suspect frequencies (Glenn Hauser, OK, DX LISTENING DIGEST)

“Make that 1655 UT when it adjourned. Glenn

“At 1818 UT, we find all three A,P frequencies back on, now with Hugo Chávez talking about the Honduran situation: 17750 with 1.2 Hz SAH generally atop WYFR, 13750 somewhat better, also audible on 13680, 12010, 11690. These leftists would not be so outraged if the oustee were a right-winger. I wonder how long this broadcast will be prolonged under the circumstances as it`s usually upwrapping about now” (Glenn Hauser, DX LISTENING DIGEST)

## Sweden

Radio Sweden To End Broadcasting In Belarusian

June 26, 2009

(RFE/RL) -- Radio Sweden plans to stop broadcasting in Belarusian as of September 1, RFE/RL's Belarus Service reports.

According to a statement by Swedish National Radio's international channel, the decision to drop broadcasting in Belarusian was made because Russian remains the major language in Belarus and, therefore, broadcasting in Russian to that country is considered sufficient.

Also, company representatives told RFE/RL that shortwave broadcasting is not effective.

Dzmitry Plaks, the producer of Radio Sweden's Belarusian programming, said that the decision might have been prompted by the current thaw in relations between the European Union and Belarus.

Plaks said the times have changed and other programs are needed for Belarus. Radio Sweden has been broadcasting in Belarusian since 2004.

[http://www.rferl.org/content/Radio\\_Sweden\\_To\\_End\\_Broadcasting\\_In\\_Belarusian/1763503.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Radio_Sweden_To_End_Broadcasting_In_Belarusian/1763503.html)

United Kingdom

BBC Radio 4

The genealogy series Tracing Your Roots will be back on air this autumn. If your genealogical research rewrote a cherished family legend, then Sally Magnusson would love to hear from you. She is also investigating Britain's colonial past, analysing our more curious surnames and looking at family trees affected by adoption. If you have a great genealogy story to share on these themes, email [tracingyourroots@bbc.co.uk](mailto:tracingyourroots@bbc.co.uk)

For a comprehensive list of all our programmes, see our [schedule pages](#).

United States

Voices heard on Tiananmen Square date

Radio Free Asia reaches users with no other free media access

June 03, 2009

By Jonathan Landreth

BEIJING -- As China limits talk about the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Massacre on Thursday by clamping down on television and new media, one old school news outfit remains harder to squelch.

Radio Free Asia's recent series of local-language broadcasts and call-in shows titled "Remembering June 4" offers shortwave radio listeners around China an alternate perspective on the outcome of the student-led democracy movement in Beijing in the spring of 1989.

To prevent cracks in the official line that the events of two decades ago were a "counter-revolutionary" conspiracy, Communist Party censors this week blocked Twitter, Hotmail and Flickr among other Web-based communications services and blacked out foreign TV news about the Tiananmen anniversary.

Meanwhile, over the din of tape-recorded funeral gongs used to jam its signal, RFA's reports could be heard using the inexpensive and common shortwave radio that some Chinese call "xiao tianshi," meaning "little angel."

RFA's China service is sent from a variety of leased facilities and from U.S. government-operated transmitters around Asia, including one in the Mariana Islands in the Central Pacific. It is the work of a team of 112 reporters, announcers, hosts, support staff and stringers in Washington, D.C., Hong Kong and around China.

"We try to be a surrogate broadcaster, offering local news the locals can't get any other way," said Dan Southerland, RFA's executive editor, who was Beijing bureau chief of the Washington Post from 1986-90. Most of his reporters are from China, and some even used to work for official media such as China Central Television.

Established in 1996, it's probably fair to say that RFA's Chinese service is by now severely disliked by the government in Beijing. When asked about the unaccredited broadcaster funded each year by \$34 million from U.S. Congress, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Qin Gang said:

"The radio station you mentioned always engages in activities that interfere with China's internal affairs."

Increasingly, some RFA reports from hard-to-reach places such as Tibet and Xinjiang are cited by independent media such as the New York Times and the Associated Press.

Last March, a few initial reports of clashes between Chinese police and Tibetan Buddhist monks came from RFA, Southerland said.

Southerland, who was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting from Beijing in 1989, and covered the Vietnam War before that for the Christian Science Monitor, said that many of his peers were doubtful about RFA. "They told me I'd have to build credibility story by story," he said.

One sign that RFA had begun to fulfill that mission came a few years ago when China's progressive Southern Weekend newspaper published a list of 50 influential Chinese intellectuals. When the list was printed, the Sichuan-based legal scholar and blogger Wang Yi disagreed with it and came up with his own list, putting RFA host William Zhang at No. 11.

"That report was pulled down (from the Web by censors) pretty quickly," Southerland said.

Although he said RFA does not express editorial opinions, its broadcasts and Web sites in nine Asian languages -- Mandarin, Cantonese, Tibetan, Uyghur, Korean, Vietnamese, Laotian, Burmese and Khmer -- are blocked or jammed constantly.

RFA's English-language site -- [www.rfa.org/english](http://www.rfa.org/english) -- was accessible in Beijing on Wednesday and included a video from 1989 showing a Chinese army troop convoy heading for Tiananmen Square. Links from the Web site to online streams of RFA radio shows were blocked.

Southerland said it's hard to count RFA's listeners, but to gauge the broadcaster's reach, he regularly pores over a hotline log that records each caller's age, location and occupation.

On May 18, for instance, one page of the log showed that RFA hosts took calls from China's Liaoning, Anhui and Hainan provinces, from the cities of Beijing and Chengdu, and from callers who identified themselves as a government employee, a small vendor and a farmer.

Most callers are men and many decline to give their names, Southerland said, "for fear of retaliation against their families." On May 18, the log recorded comments from two young Chinese callers to a show about the Tiananmen anniversary:

"I don't really know about June 4, but I want to know more about it because I am in college now"; and, "Our history teacher mentioned it but it is still very mysterious to me."

An older caller who told RFA he was a supporter of pro-democracy students in Shanghai in 1989 said that the police asked him on April 15 this year to sign a statement agreeing not to talk to his activist friends during "the sensitive June 4 period."

The caller agreed but eventually lost patience and dialed in to an RFA show. "I am calling RFA to speak my mind," he said, according to Southerland's log.

Host William Zhang, a Chinese transplant to Washington who won't use his full Chinese name on the air, averages about 14 calls a day and, Southerland said, has the ability to remain cool in the face of accusations of treason.

Southerland encourages RFA hosts to give all callers fair time, within reason, to uphold a commitment to editorial balance. "I love to see that, because it means that we've got a little bit of a debate there and not just a fan club," Southerland said.

In addition to interference from funeral music, RFA often gets repeated calls from people who simply hang up. This, Southerland believes, is the work of a "50-cent army," a group, perhaps of Chinese nationalists, he said, who are paid by the call to mess with RFA.

On the other end of the spectrum of influence, Southerland said he occasionally gets calls from people pitching stories about a famous author, for instance. Over the years he has been pleasantly surprised that nobody ever has leaned on him to tell him how RFA should report the hard news.

In the name of balance, if China's government makes a move designed to help farmers, for example, RFA will cite the official Xinhua news agency in its initial report, until it can get independent confirmation.

Southerland's hope always is to stick with hard-to-get investigative stories and to compete with many of the bigger news outfits with official accreditation in China.

Southerland said that for years RFA has been out in front on a story about the unwitting transfer of underage ethnic Uyghur girls from Xinjiang to factories on China's east coast. To develop the story reporters from RFA's Mandarin-language service worked with their Uyghur-language producer-counterparts to call local Chinese officials who typically are less responsive to reporters not fluent in Mandarin.

"Mostly we get denials from officials, but occasionally we get a new piece of information this way," Southerland said.

As to official access to the government in Beijing, Southerland said RFA monitors the regular press briefings by Qin and his colleagues but has "no access" otherwise. A recent letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting accreditation was not answered, Southerland said.

RFA did enjoy brief accreditation in Beijing during the Olympics last August, when Taiwan-born RFA reporter Jill Ku managed to videotape a petitioner complaining openly about the government before he was carted off by police.

Southerland declined to introduce any of RFA's regular callers, some of whom, he said, call in dozens of times before they get through and often use payphones to avoid being traced.

"A lot of people, we've discovered, don't even want to admit they're listening to us," he said. "Word of mouth is a big deal. One person may go out of town and have a picnic in the trees and listen to us then come back and tell his friends. It may sound low-tech, but it's a reality."

[http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/hr/content\\_display/asia/china/e3ie4dd94cdd5b8fd288f524e5496d1266b](http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/hr/content_display/asia/china/e3ie4dd94cdd5b8fd288f524e5496d1266b)

I'm not sure if this is performance art, or a recording. Probably the latter.

Michael Snow  
2 Radio Solos  
By Nilan Perera

This release is as much an artefact in time as it is a musical presentation. The image of Michael Snow sitting in a kerosene lamp-lit cabin in northern Canada scanning the shortwave band is something that is quintessentially of this country. The signals are further altered by a cassette recorder whose batteries are running down, providing the only semblance of "post-production" that manifests in this distinctly primitive scenario. Sounds range from voices and music from around the world phasing in and out of the air, combined with the static-laden, whining frequency shifts that warp with every slight turn of the dial. This way of creating can only be achieved with the analog dial — no digital manipulation here. The charm of this release is the chance aspect of the act. Snow couldn't have known what would appear as he tweaked the dial but shows his improvisational skill by knowing when to stay on, leave or modulate each of the frequencies he happens upon. (Blackwood Gallery)

<http://www.exclaim.ca/musicreviews/latestsub.aspx?csid1=133&csid2=870&fid1=39082>

Languages of Shortwave

The following is from my December 1996 column and relates to the item on Ecuador.

Low German is traced to the North German lowlands. It is common to those whose forefathers settled in West Prussia in the early 1700s and then migrated to South Russia in the early 1800s. Low German is associated with the Mennonites of North America and Russia. (In fact, everyone I've known who had heard of the dialect or could speak it, was Mennonite-ed).

Low German does not have a formally recognized written form or spelling method. Not surprisingly, Low German bears many similarities to Dutch, its north European cousin. Some examples: In Low German- Plautdietsch; In German- Plattdeutsch (Low German).

I have a book of "Plautdietsche Schreftsteckja" or "Low-German Writings" by Reuben Epp, published in Steinbach, Manitoba in 1972. (Steinbach is an important area of Mennonite settlement in Canada). This book is the source of the first two paragraphs above. Despite the fact that I have four years of High School German, the written form in my possession is almost unintelligible. However, hearing it is a different story.

In the 1980s there was a program on WRNO in Low German, which was called "The Gospel Message". It originated in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. In 1985, I was able to follow enough of the broadcast to write a letter and essentially get a confirmation of reception from the presenter. I was interested to note that the program originated in my dad's home town and also learned that the presenters' grandfather was born 120 years to the day before me! While "The Gospel Message" is no longer on short-wave (it IS on a string of stations in Western Canada/US and a couple in South America) due to the fact that it did not get sufficient listener response, the possibility exists that it may return someday.

HCJB has been one of the few sources of Low German broadcasting in the world.

I guess the last word is "Daut Enj" (The End).