

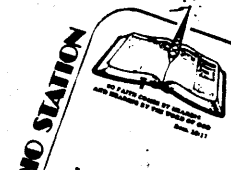
RADIO K'EKCHI'

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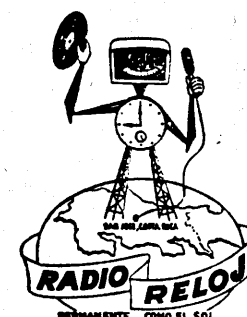
ABIX CAL T XU GBA



RADIO IMPACTO



TGNA
P.O. BOX 871 - GUATEMALA CITY, G.A.



A DXERS TOUR OF CENTRAL AMERICA

Rich D'Angelo

Central America offers the DXer a number of interesting shortwave broadcast targets of varying degrees of difficulty. The countries of Central America provide interesting listening and the well informed DXer can add new stations to the log and many interesting verifications too. In addition to a sizable number of licensed broadcasters, the region supports a number of clandestine radio stations who target listeners outside the region as well as those within their borders. Only Panama is not represented on the shortwave bands. Therefore, this feature will focus on the six Central American countries represented on shortwave: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

While new stations are periodically added to the Central American lineup, the actual number of stations on shortwave in 1990 is fewer than in 1980. This is due to the slight commercial value broadcasting on shortwave has in this region. However, religious broadcasters never tire in their efforts to reach the many thousands of rural villagers and tribesmen located in remote areas. Consequently, most of the recent additions to the shortwave scene in Central America are religious organizations.

This feature will provide a country by country review of shortwave broadcasting activity in each of the six Central American countries where shortwave broadcasting exists. Let's begin with some background information about the area.

LOCATION

Central America is the narrow band of land on the southern end of North America. It is bordered by Mexico on the north and Colombia on the south. On the east is the Caribbean Sea and to the west is the Pacific Ocean. The region consists of seven countries - Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama and covers 201,847 square miles or 522,781 square kilometers. The total population of Central America is approximately 30 million.

There are lowlands on both coasts of Central America. Rugged mountains crisscross the inland region. These mountain ranges make transportation very difficult. Most of the people in the region live in the highlands of mountainous areas where they earn a living on tiny farms.

THE PEOPLE

The population of Central America is very diverse. The people of Guatemala can be divided into two groups - Indians and people of mixed Spanish and Indian ancestry. Over half the country's population speak an Indian language descended from the Maya Indians. Most of the people of Honduras and El Salvador are mestizo - mixed Indian and European ancestry. Large numbers of blacks live in Belize, Nicaragua, and Panama. Costa Ricans are mainly of European descent.

The official language of Belize is English. Spanish is the official language of the rest of Central America. However, many Indians in Guatemala speak native Indian languages.

UNIFICATION ATTEMPTS

There have been numerous attempts over the years to create political unification of Central American countries. Since the early 1800's, there have been at least 25 separate efforts. All of these attempted unifications have

been short lived with most lasting only a few months.

In 1823, the United Provinces of Central America was formed. The federation consisted of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The people of the federation failed to develop any unity and the union dissolved in 1840 when its President, Francisco Morazan, was driven into exile. Morazan formed another union just two years later when El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua created the Central American Confederation. However, the government was too weak to enforce its rule and collapsed in 1845.

The Central American Court of Justice was established in 1907 and consisted of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. It was dissolved in 1918 when Nicaragua ignored the courts findings over disputed canal building rights. In 1921, the Central American federation was formed which united El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras under one central government. The federation collapsed within a year.

Despite the many failed attempts to unite politically, there have been many instances of successful regional organizations. In 1948, all the Central American countries, excluding Belize which was still under British rule as British Honduras, joined with other Latin American countries and the United States to form the Organization of American States. In 1951, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua established the Organization of Central American States which promotes cultural, economic and political understanding among the member nations. In 1960, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua created the Central American Common market which provides for free trade among its members. Costa Rica joined the group in 1963. It broke up after the 1969 war between El Salvador and Honduras.

BELIZE

The former English colony of British Honduras was granted self government in 1964. It was renamed Belize in 1973 and achieved independence as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations in 1981. It is bordered by Mexico to the north, Guatemala to the south and west, and the Caribbean Sea to the east.

BROADCASTING IN BELIZE

The Belize Broadcasting Network is the government operated, semi-commercial broadcasting system that provides all the broadcasting activities in the country. A series of 4 medium wave, 2 FM and one shortwave station cover the country. There are no television stations in Belize.

Belize Radio One

In 1952, Radio Station ZIK - 2 was founded with the technical assistance of the British government. The transmitter was made in London and operated at a power of 5 kilowatts on 3,300 kHz. Although no longer in use, that transmitter is still operational and located in the outskirts of Belize City. In 1957, the stations name was changed to the British Honduras Broadcasting Service. In 1961, a new shortwave transmitter was inaugurated in Ladyville just north of Belize City. In 1976n it was moved to Belmopan which is approximately 50 miles or 80 kilometers southwest of Belize City. The transmitter is a Collins EA20 capable of 1 kilowatt output into a half wave dipole antenna. In 1972, the station changed its name to Radio Belize. This was followed by a name change in 1986 to the currently used Belize Radio One.

Most programming is in English and Spanish. Also, there are cultural programs in vernaculars. Typical programming for Belize Radio One consists of News and information programs, educational features, agricultural reports, religious services, children's programs, and obituaries. The main purpose of the shortwave outlet is to cover parts of Belize where medium wave or FM signals are not well received. The station also provides the latest weather reports to ships in the Caribbean basin. The station is scheduled to operate from 1100 to 0500 UTC on a frequency of 3,285 kHz. Reports of their shortwave operation can best be classified as "erratic". The station has been off the air since June 1989. It is expected to return to shortwave sometime during 1990.

In recent years, the station has not been well heard due to problems with the transmitter. However, Belize Radio One has been a good verifier of listener reception reports over the years. Their oversized map card has not changed in over 25 years! Reports in English with return postage in the form of mint stamps or International Reply Coupons (IRC's) should be addressed to P. O. Box 89, Belize City, Belize.

COSTA RICA

Rumors of huge gold deposits lead Spanish explorers to the "rich coast" area in 1502. However, the Spaniards found little mineral wealth there. Costa Rica remained a Spanish colony until 1821 when Costa Rica and the other Central American colonies broke away from Spanish rule. It is bordered by Nicaragua in the north, Panama and the Caribbean Sea in the east, and the Pacific Ocean in the south and west.

BROADCASTING IN COSTA RICA

The country has a variety of medium wave stations with many of them based in the San Jose area. There are almost 500 thousand television sets in this country of 3 million people. There are five networks providing television on 6 channels. Although shortwave has little commercial value, the country has a number of shortwave broadcasters. Most of the recent additions are religious outfits. However, Radio Exterior de Espana plans to build a relay station in Costa Rica in the near future.

Radio Reloj (TIHB)

In 1945 Sr. Roger Barahona Gomez began broadcasting with a small station he named Radio Cristal. In 1952, Radio Cristal began shortwave broadcasting on 6,006 kHz. The station put out a good signal and reception reports were received from around the world. In February 1958, the station's name was changed to Radio Reloj. By 1962, the Barahona Family formed "Sistema Radiofonica HB" with the acquisition of a second radio station. By 1969, a second shortwave station began operating on 4,832 kHz using the name Radio Capital. Over time the two services were consolidated into the present Radio Reloj operation.

Radio Reloj operates two Elcor VT - 2V transmitters utilizing 2,500 watts each for shortwave broadcasts on 4,832 kHz and 6,006 kHz. Each transmitter is connected to a half wave dipole antenna. The transmitter site is located in San Antonio Parado which is approximately 5 miles or 8 kilometers away from the station's San Jose studios. In 1989, the station's shortwave transmitter on 4,832 kHz went off the air. However, 1990 has seen the reactivation of this classic Costa Rican shortwave station to the delight of many listeners.

The station broadcasts exact time checks during their music and social service programs. The social service programs provide listeners an opportunity to broadcast free messages to the community. In 1970, the station introduced a feature called "Aeronoticias" which informed listeners of domestic and international flight information from El Coco Airport. The station's frequent identifications make them an easy target to spot on the shortwave bands.

Radio Reloj is an inconsistent verifier. Their familiar globe QSL card is in the collection of many DXers. Unfortunately, many DXers have expressed disappointment about unanswered letters. Reports in Spanish with return postage in either mint stamps or a US\$1.00 should be sent to Radio Reloj, Apartado 341, 1000 San Jose, Costa Rica.

Radio Columbia (TILX)

Founded in July 1964 as a medium wave station by Sr. Francisco Cordoba, Radio Columbia branched off into the world of shortwave broadcasting in the latter part of 1983. TILX was first known for the many different frequencies it utilized - 4,825 kHz; 4,840 kHz; 5,010 kHz; and finally 4,850 kHz.

Its major news effort was Noticieros Columbia. Radio Columbia also featured short news summaries every thirty minutes. While on shortwave, it employed 13 people in the news department. The principle reason for shortwave

broadcasting was to convey a complete picture of democratic countries to other non-democratic countries in Central America. Because of its size, Costa Rica doesn't need shortwave to cover the population with broadcast information. Essentially, Radio Columbia was an external service.

Radio Columbia used an Elcor BT - 20 transmitter with a 2 element quad antenna. The transmitter has a potential of 20 kilowatts. The station was a good verifier with receptionist and v/s Rossy Cordero being a well known name in DX circles. The WRTH still lists this station in the 1990 edition, however it is listed as inactive. The shortwave transmitter is broken and repairing it is not a priority. Perhaps they will return to the shortwave bands once again. One never knows about the Latin stations. If they do return to shortwave, Spanish language reception reports with return postage in the form of mint stamps should be sent to the station at Radio Columbia, Apartado 708, 1000 San Jose, Costa Rica.

Faro del Caribe (TIFC)

This station was founded in February 1948 by the Mision Latinoamericana as the first cultural station in Costa Rica. Today, TIFC is a religious broadcaster with most of its programming in Spanish. There is a daily hour of English programming at 0300 UTC. In addition to religious fare the station offers a wide variety of cultural programs.

Faro del Caribe, or The Lighthouse of the Caribbean in English, has three control rooms or studios. The first holds a Gates console mixer, an Ampex open tape deck, two Gates disk players and a TEAC cassette tape deck. The second studio contains an Internacional Tapetronics Corporacion console mixer, a TEAC A303 cassette tape deck, two Broadcasting Electronics cartridges, and an ATR - 700 open tape deck. The third studio contains a Broadcasting Electronics console mixer, two Internacional Tapetronics Corporacion disk players, a Realistic SCT - 29 tape deck, and three Broadcasting Electronics cartridge tape decks. This studio is used for live programs.

Faro del Caribe operates on three shortwave frequencies. A five kilowatt RCA transmitter using a horizontal arch antenna with three towers is used on 5,055 kHz. It is used to cover all of Costa Rica and much of Central America and is well heard throughout North America. A 2.5 kilowatt CCA AM-2500 transmitter is used on 6,175 kHz for their morning service. It is well received in remote areas of the country. The 9,645 kHz channel uses a 1960 vintage transmitter with only 500 watts into a 1/2 wave dipole. The schedule is 1000 - 2000 UTC, and 2300 - 0600 UTC with English between 0300 - 0400 UTC. The 49 meter band outlet is used between 1000 and 2000 UTC. the 31 meter band channel is used 1000 - 1800 UTC and on an irregular basis from 2300 to 0400 UTC.

The station is a quite friendly and has an English Correspondence Department, therefore requests for verification cards can be sent in English. The Lighthouse of the Caribbean issues a full data QSL verification card and is glad to receive reports from places where their signal is heard. Reception reports with mint stamps should be sent to Gerente Juan J. Ochoa F. at Faro del Caribe, Apartado 2710, 1000 San Jose, Costa Rica.

Radio Impacto (TIRI)

In April 1983, Radio Impacto bought the frequency license of Radio Atenea a medium wave and shortwave station that specialized in playing Salsa music. Frequency licenses are issued by the Ministry of Communications in each province and are difficult to obtain due to spectrum agreements with neighboring countries in Central America. Consequently, these licenses are very valuable.

Initially, Radio Impacto was a music station playing Spanish pops music 90% of their broadcast day. Due to station personnel problems, the station ended their 24 hour service in 1984. The station began anti-Sandinista news broadcasts in September 1983 aimed at Nicaragua. This and other anti-Sandinista programming has created some friction in the region. Although they carry commercial announcements, many DXers classify this station as a partial clandestine operation. It's goals appear politically oriented. The shortwave service is a democracy propaganda machine aimed at a Nicaragua audience. The station is an outspoken critic of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. It is said that the station is run by anti-Sandinista's with close ties to the FDN. DXers visiting the station have encountered a top secret atmosphere. This station targets a Nicaraguan audience. There is very little emphasis placed on the domestic audience by the shortwave service.

Radio Impacto operates in the 49 meter band. Generally, it can be found operating its 20 kilowatt Elcor transmitter on 6,150 kHz. However, it has been known to move around in this band. Moves to 6,140 kHz and 6,160 kHz have occurred over the years due to interference. In late 1987, Radio Impacto introduced a new frequency in the 60 meter tropical band of 5,030 kHz. This new outlet puts out a booming signal. During 1989 and 1990, this frequency has been changed to 5,044 kHz for short periods of time. These unexplained events usually occur with a shift by Radio Catolica in Ecuador shifting from its usual 5,040 kHz channel to 5,030 kHz. Confusing and interesting. This keeps clandestine radio enthusiasts busy. In May 1990, the station went off the air. Perhaps the changes in Nicaragua have eliminated the need for this broadcaster. The station is for sale and the future of further shortwave broadcasting is in doubt.

The station has had an on-again off-again attitude about verifications. At first, Radio Impacto was an excellent QSLer. However, some staff changes lead to the station becoming a non-verifier for a period of time. Recently, TIRI verie signer Hector Requena C. has been responding to listeners letters. Spanish language reception reports with return postage in the form of mint stamps should be sent to Radio Impacto, 497 San Pedro de Montes de Oca, 25 m suroeste del higueron, San Jose, Costa Rica.

Radio Casino (TIQ)

Puerto Limon's most popular radio station began from a very modest medium wave radio operation. Today, Radio Casino operates on medium wave, FM and shortwave. Radio Casino was the discovery of three radio enthusiasts in 1945. It began operations with only a 200 watt homebrew transmitter on 555 kHz. The AM frequency changed to 1,175 kHz before ultimately ending up on its present 1,220 kHz channel. In 1955, shortwave was added in order to reach remote areas along the Atlantic coast.

Radio Casino features a wide variety of news, music, sports, religious (Sundays) and entertainment programming in Spanish and English. Its English programs contribute to the station's popularity with the black, Jamaican communities located in this region. The station operates on 5,954 kHz with only 700 watts power and operates from 1030 - 0600 UTC. English programs are carried from 2300 - 0000 UTC and from 0400 - 0600 UTC. The station's low power and frequency location make it a difficult catch in the low end of the 49 meter band.

Traditionally, the station has been a good verifier with Radio Casino pennants displayed in many DXers shacks. Since the station does employ English speaking personnel, reports in Spanish or English are acceptable provided they contain return postage in the form of mint stamps. Station owner Luis Grau will be glad to receive your reports at Radio Casino, Apartado 287, Puerto Limon, Costa Rica.

Adventist World Radio (TIASD)

The station began operations in September 1987 with two heavily modified Consasa five kilowatt transmitters using a Kenwood TS - 430S exciter and an Eimac 4CX5000 final tube. Two five element Yagi antennas with 12 db gain are used on 15,460 kHz and 11,870 kHz. The 31 meter band and 49 meter band outlets use dipole antennas. The station also uses two towers; one self-supporting structure of 32 meters; the other a 36 meter guyed structure. During 1989, two new Elco transmitters were placed into service. One is a 40 kilowatt unit using a Log Periodic antenna; the other is a 5 kilowatt unit using a 5 element Yagi antenna.

AWR - Latin America is predominantly a religious broadcaster. However, it features a number of health, informational, and medical features in Spanish, French and English. The station operates daily from 1100 - 1500 UTC and from 2300 - 0500 UTC. French is heard between 1100 - 1200 UTC; English is heard between 1200 1400 UTC and 2300 - 0100 UTC; and Spanish is heard between 1400 - 1500 UTC and 0100 - 0500 UTC. This schedule is subject to many variations. The 5 kilowatt transmitter is used for broadcasts to Central America on 11,870 kHz. The 40 kilowatt transmitter on 9,725 kHz is used for broadcasting to North and Central America. The staff consists of a Manager/Chief Engineer, a Program Director, three Secretaries and several operators. Because the station is located on the grounds of the Seventh-day Adventist College, the station is able to get help from several students. The AWR facilities in Costa Rica were designed to be the main production facilities for Adventist World Radio - Latin America. These studios produce large portions of the programming for here and Guatemala. AWR has a

recording studio and two on air studios at this facility.

The station is an excellent verifier with Station Manager and Chief Engineer David L. Gregory responding to listeners letters and reports. English language reception reports with return postage can be sent to Adventist World Radio, TIASD Radio Lira, Apartado 1177, 4050 Alajuela, Costa Rica.

Radio Rumbo (TICAL)

Another Costa Rican shortwave station that is currently inactive is Radio Rumbos. This station was very popular in the early 1980's with its well known singing potato QSL card finding its way into many DXers shacks. The potato is symbolic of potato production in the Cartago region of Costa Rica. The station was founded in May 1966 and has had occasional runs on shortwave. Consequently, it bears watching as a potential shortwave target in the future.

The shortwave transmitter was made by the stations Gerente, Sr. Carlos Alberto Lafuente. It had a one kilowatt output into a 1/4 wave antenna using the nominal frequency of 6,075 kHz. When operating the stations frequency was subject to drifting and was frequently reported as 6,072 kHz. The station was principally a music station which is unlike other Costa Rican stations that broadcast news and information for a Nicaraguan audience. The WRTH lists the medium wave stations operating hours as 1100 - 0600 UTC with a note indicating "also on shortwave". Could a resumption of shortwave broadcasts be in the future of Radio Rumbo? If they do return, it will reflect the gerente's keen interest in shortwave. The station can be reached at Apartado 140, 7050 Cartago, Costa Rica.

Radio Universidad de Costa Rica (TIUCR)

This is the least frequently heard station of all the active Costa Ricans on shortwave. Its low power, frequency selection and schedule combine to make this a difficult DX catch. It was founded in November 1948.

Radio Universidad is a University station; something only Mexico shares in common with the Central American countries. Its purpose is to provide culture and education through radio. It is located only fifteen minutes from San Jose in San Pedro Montes de Oca. Programs consist of culture, education, agriculture, entertainment, and classical music. They depend on transcription tape services of many international broadcasters such as the BBC, Radio Canada International, Radio Japan, VOA, etc. The station is scheduled from 1300 - 0400 UTC in a very congested 49 meter band on 6,105 kHz. Their late sign-on time makes North American reception very rare. Recent field reports indicate the station is off the air. A new station manager has indicated an interest in returning to shortwave. However, the station will have to reconstruct the antenna and do minor maintenance work on the transmitter.

The station's equipment consists of a disk library, a fully equipped broadcasting studio and a recording studio. By Latin standards, their equipment is new. Their two kilowatt Elcor BT - 2 transmitter is connected to a 1/4 wave dipole antenna.

TIUCR is a tough station to hear, however, if you are fortunate to log this one try sending a Spanish report with mint stamps to Director Jose Tasies Solis at Radio Universidad de Costa Rica, Apartado 2198, 1000 San Jose, Costa Rica.

Radio For Peace International

In 1979, Dr. Rodrigo Carazo, President of Costa Rica from 1978 - 1982, presented the concept of a University for Peace to the General Assembly of the United Nations. In 1980, the United Nations unanimously adopted a resolution to establish The University for Peace in Costa Rica as an independent institution in both program and funding. The World Peace University was incorporated as a nonprofit educational corporation in December 1980. It opened its doors for classes in October 1985. The radio station is a joint project of the World Peace University in Eugene, Oregon USA and the University for Peace in Ciudad Colon, Costa Rica. RFPI broadcasts from the campus of the University for Peace commenced in September 1987.

RFPI is operated by a six member Board of Directors comprised of three members appointed by each university. It operates on an autonomous financial basis, supported entirely from private donations, program fees, and listener support. Programming consists of a mix of interviews, talk shows, dialogues, information exchange, news analysis, a wide variety of music, poetry, plays, cultural exchanges, as well as courses from the two universities. They are the only station in Central America to carry Glenn Hauser's World of Radio program. The majority of the programming is in English with two hours of Spanish programming on a daily basis and two hours of French programs on a weekly basis. The station estimates that approximately 35,000 listeners tune in their station on a daily basis.

The station is staffed entirely by volunteers. It is an international and multilingual staff. The two transmitters were built by the staff and are used to simulcast program material on two bands. The station uses four bands during the day to optimize reception. Six element and three element Yagi antennas are rotated on their 35 meter tower for broadcasts to North America, Europe, and the South Pacific. A bidirectional two element antenna provides coverage to Central and South America. The effective radiated power on 21,565 kHz and 7,375 kHz is 26 kilowatts. The effective radiated power on 25,495 kHz and 13,660 kHz is 16 kilowatts. The stations schedule and frequency selections are variable and subject to seasonal changes. Recently, an upper sideband broadcast on 7,375 kHz has been well heard in North America between 0030 - 0400 UTC.

Radio for Peace International is a good verifier. English language reception reports with return postage can be sent to Station Manager and verie signer James Latham at Radio for Peace International, P. O. Box 10869, Eugene, OR 97440, USA or Apartado 88, Santa Ana, Costa Rica.

EL SALVADOR

El Salvador is the smallest Central American country in area. However, it has more people than any other nation in the region except Guatemala. It is the most densely populated mainland in the Western Hemisphere. The country is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the south, Guatemala to the northwest and Honduras to the northeast.

BROADCASTING IN EL SALVADOR

A majority of families own one or more radios. Most broadcasting is on the AM broadcast band. No official radio broadcasts are on shortwave at the moment. However, shortwave has been a very successful form of communication for the guerillas fighters in the country. There are over 400 thousand television sets and 4 TV networks in the country. Also, there are six daily newspapers in the country.

YSSS Radio El Salvador

In 1926 the government's radio voice, Radiodifusora Nacional de El Salvador was established with the call sign AQM. The call sign of the station is taken from the the initials of then President Alfonso Quinonez Molina. The station used a 500 watt transmitter on a frequency of 636 kHz. In 1927 the call sign was changed to RUS to avoid a conflict with Norwegian call sign prefix allocations under the International Radiotelegraphic Agreement. The call sign was changed in 1933 to RDN - Radio Difusora Nacional. In 1936 the call sign and station name were changed to YSS - Radio Nacional de El Salvador.

On March 1, 1953, Radio Nacional de El Salvador began an external service on shortwave using two 5 kilowatt transmitters on the frequencies of 9,555 kHz and 5,950 kHz. This external service was heard worldwide as indicated by the volume and diversity of the mail. After struggling for many years, the shortwave transmitters were taken off the air in 1976 due to a lack of spare parts. However, from time to time the station is reported to be back on the air. Therefore, checking their well known frequencies could yield a surprise log. In 1978, the station's name was changed once again to YSSS - Radio El Salvador. It's purpose is to provide cultural, informational, and social programming as well as spread government opinion in the country.

There are no plans for the station to reactivate shortwave broadcasts in the near future. However, if the station does surprise the world by fixing an old, broken down shortwave transmitter, then address those reception reports

to the station at YSSS Radio El Salvador, Parque Venustiano Carranza, San Salvador, El Salvador.

Radio Venceremos

Characteristic of the turmoil of the region is the guerilla shortwave station Radio Venceremos. The station claims to broadcast from Morazan Department in El Salvador and is operated by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). During the many years of struggle that has engulfed this country, the station has been visited on a number of occasion by broadcasters and journalists. The broadcasters and journalists support the claim of the station's location. That makes Radio Venceremos a shortwave broadcast station from El Salvador.

Radio Venceremos broadcasts the typically anti-government fare associated with clandestine radio stations. Programs are broadcast numerous times during the day. Typical scheduling shows broadcasts at 0000 - 0115 UTC, 0200 - 0315 UTC, and 1215 - 1315 UTC using 6,835 kHz, 6,340 kHz, and 5,550 kHz. Typically, the stations frequency is "adjusted" during the course of the broadcast to avoid jamming activity. Currently, a popular frequency range for this station is between 6,830 - 6,900 kHz. Once logged, be prepared to chase after this stations as it seeks to avoid the jammer. On special occasions, this station and Radio Farabundo Marti link up and provide joint programming.

Over the years, Radio Venceremos has given a Mexico City address over the air. Very few QSL's have been reported through this location. A more successful route has been through a New York City address which has yielded a number of replies in 1989 and 1990 from v/s Anita Ocampo, Correspondent of Radio Venceremos in the USA. Reports can be in English and should contain return postage or an self-addressed, stamped envelope and a prepared QSL card. The address is Radio Venceremos, c/o El Salvador Media Project, 335 West 38th Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10018, USA.

Radio Farabundo Marti

Another long time anti-government station claiming to be located in Northern Chalatenango Province is Radio Farabundo Marti. Founded on January 22, 1982, the station operates under constant military attack forcing it to move its location to avoid destruction by the El Salvador government.

The station broadcasts news, cultural and educational programs designed to reflect their struggle for social change. The station relies on a network of "popular correspondents" scattered across the nation to feed it information on events in all parts of El Salvador. Many of the correspondents live among the general population. Often they accompany the guerrillas into battle. The station hopes to resume FM broadcasts because the majority of El Salvadorians lack access to shortwave receivers. In October 1988, the El Salvador Radio Aid Project was formed to provide material and financial support for Radio Farabundo Marti.

The station has operated at times and in frequency ranges similar to Radio Venceremos. They are nominally scheduled to operate from 1200 - 1300 UTC, and 2300 - 2400 UTC between 6,600 kHz and 6,750 kHz. However, their broadcasts frequently last to 0200 UTC and beyond. Like many clandestine stations, finding a good address for QSL's can be difficult. Earlier this year, a new address for this elusive verifier has popped up. A prepared card with an SASE to Radio Farabundo Marti's US Representative and verie signer Jaime Suriano should be sent to the El Salvador Radio Aid Project, P. O. Box 1614, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10011, USA.

GUATEMALA

More people live in this Central American country than any other. Most of its people live in the mountains in the central part of the country. Its capital, Guatemala City, is located in this region and it is the largest city in Central America. Almost half of the people are Indians, ancestors of the Mayans, whose customs and way of life differs from that of other Guatemalans. The country is bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the south, Mexico to the west and north, Belize to the northeast, the Caribbean Sea to the east and El Salvador and Honduras to the east and southeast.

BROADCASTING IN GUATEMALA

The country's nearly 10 million people are served by 10 daily newspapers, most of which are privately owned. The postal, telegraph, and telephone systems are government operated and provide service only to the cities and towns. Therefore, radio is extremely important in the many rural regions of the country. On average, there is one radio for every 20 people in the country.

Guatemala provides the DX listener with many of the more exotic catches from Central America. The diverse blends of music, Indian languages and culture make Guatemala a choice DX target for those interested in DXing the Latins. Some of the stations are relatively easy while others present a very difficult task for even the most experienced hobbyist. The World Radio TV Handbook ("WRTH") lists twelve different shortwave broadcast outlets in Guatemala.

Future rural broadcasting stations in this country will undoubtedly be shortwave outlets. There is a freeze on medium wave stations due to the severe overcrowding on that band. Also, the FM band is impractical in this mountainous country. Many years ago, the Ministerio de Comunicaciones y Obras Publicas prohibited commercial shortwave transmissions. Prior to that prohibition there were many commercial Guatemalan stations broadcasting in the 49 meter band. Religious broadcasters have made the country a battle ground with the Evangelists making inroads into this predominately Catholic country. Since commercial shortwave broadcasting is prohibited by law in Guatemala, the new shortwave outlets will most likely be sponsored by religious organizations. In fact, the most recent additions to the Guatemalan shortwave community were Evangelist stations Radio Buenas Nuevas and Radio K'ekchi'.

Generally speaking, the shortwave broadcasters of Guatemala are good verifiers. Spanish language reception reports accompanied by return postage in the form of Guatemalan mint stamps should yield very good results from this country. Many stations provide pennants, station stickers, schedules, pins, buttons and other mementos thereby making this country a favorite among QSL hounds.

Radio Mam (TGMN)

This station began operating on 11 January 1975 as an inspirational Christian broadcaster. This catholic station is designed to serve the cultural needs of the Guatemalan peasants ("campesinos") and the Mam Indians of the area. The station is located in Cabrican which is some 300 meters above sea level in the mountains of Quetzaltenango Department. Most of the inhabitants of the area are descendants of the Mayans and speak Mam.

Radio Mam broadcasts on 4,825 kHz with a power of 1,000 watts. Broadcast times are from 1300 to 1700 UTC and from 2000 to 2330 UTC. Occasionally the station stays on later and these late sign-off times provide an excellent opportunity to log and QSL this station. The types of programs carried by Radio Mam include: agriculture; health and education in the home; youth and family; religion; Maya culture; Guatemalan music and variety; and news and greetings. The station is affiliated with the Federacion Guatemalteca de Escuelas Radiofonicas ("FGER") and the Asociacion Latinoamericana de Educacion Radiofonica ("ALER").

Radio Mam is a good verifier. Station Director Jose Benito Escalante Ramos can be reached at Radio Mam, Escuelas Radiofonicas, Municipio de Cabrican, Dept. Quezaltenango, Guatemala.

Union Radio (TGMUA, TGMUB)

In recent years this broadcaster has been relatively inactive on shortwave. Operated by the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Union Radio operates on 5,980 kHz under the call sign TGMUA and on 6,090 kHz with the call sign TGMUB. Both channels use the same 10,000 watts transmitter. According to the WRTH the nominal broadcasting hours on 5,980 kHz is 1100 - 1300 UTC and 0030 - 0500 UTC and on 6,090 kHz from 1045 - 1300 UTC and 0000 - 0400 UTC. Despite its irregular appearance on the shortwave bands this station seems to manage to make it on the air around the Christmas holiday season.

Until AWR - Latin America opened up another outlet in Costa Rica, this was the main AWR station in Central

America. The station is equipped with some of the most modern equipment of any Guatemalan broadcaster. Its medium wave outlet on 1330 kHz carries advertisements every thirty minutes. The revenue generated from these ads is used to support station operations.

Like most AWR outlets this station is a good verifier. Reports generally receive a letter, a QSL card and a calendar from their Operations Director. Address reports to Union Radio, Adventist World Radio, Apartado 51 - C, Guatemala City, Guatemala.

Radio Cultural (TGNC, TGNA)

This Evangelist station is usually one of the first Guatemalan shortwave stations in most DXers logbooks. Their regular schedule, clear channel, regular English broadcasts, and strong signal combine to make this happen.

The station was founded in August 1950 by a Harold Van Broekhoven of the Central American Mission. Initially, Radio Cultural broadcast only on medium wave using 730 kHz. In 1955, Radio Cultural added an International Radio Electronics 5 kilowatt transmitter operating in the 25 and 31 meter bands. Later this transmitter was switched to the present 5,995 kHz channel. Later, a 10 kilowatt Collins transmitter was obtained. However, repairs and maintenance are expensive and this transmitter is frequently out of service. In 1970, current Chief Engineer Wayne Berger modified an old 10 kilowatt medium wave transmitter utilizing a half-wave dipole antenna to successfully cover all of Central America on 3,300 kHz.

Radio Cultural broadcasts on 3,300 kHz, and the rarely heard 5,955 kHz, from 1000 - 0700 UTC. The stations objectives are to provide spiritual uplift, evangelism and education. The programming is predominately of a religious nature. Some of the features include: bible teachings, sacred music, religious messages inserted in secular music programs, advisory programs, cultural and education items, classical music, and national and international news. Most of their programs are directed to the poor and needy. Most of the programming is in Spanish. However there are some local Indian language features and unlike most of the Guatemalan broadcasters on shortwave, this station carries a regular English language segment from 0300 - 0430 UTC daily. These English features are produced by North American religious organizations and are targeted to missionaries working in Central America.

Radio Cultural is a good verifier. Reception reports, in English or Spanish, should be sent to their QSL Secretary at Radio Cultural, Apartado 601, Guatemala City, Guatemala.

La Voz de Nahuala (TGVN)

Founded 21 November 1962, this Catholic station celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1987 proclaiming 25 years of service to the local community. The station carries out its public service obligations by offering a blend of cultural, educational and religious programs. It was the first cultural-educational station for the farmers in Solola Department. Specific program themes include agriculture, farming, health, the Catholic religion, rural living, the family and Maya culture. La Voz de Nahuala also carries music and recreational programs. Their educational programs are for teaching the campesinos to learn to read and write.

La Voz de Nahuala uses a Brasil Philips 20A-3 transmitter and a horizontal 1/2 wave three tower antenna. Broadcasting on 3,360 kHz with 1 kilowatt, La Voz de Nahuala is regularly heard in North America. Targeting to the Quiche and Cakchiquel Indian groups this station broadcasts about 95% of its programs in the Quiche and Cakchiquel languages. The remaining 5% are in Spanish. They broadcast Monday through Saturday from 1100 - 1400 UTC and from 2100 - 0300 UTC. On Sunday they broadcast from 1100 - 1400 UTC and from 1900 - 0300 UTC. On occasion the station has appeared on 5,040 kHz.

The station responds to reception reports with a full data personal letter from the Director de Programacion, Sr. Diego Adrain Guarchaj Ajtzalam or Juan Fidel Leppe Juarez. Frequently the station responds with a nice station pennant. Address those reception reports to La Voz de Nahuala, Nahuala, Departamento de Solola, Guatemala.

Radio Maya de Barillas (TGBA)

This Evangelist broadcaster targets one of the smaller Indian groups, the Canjobels, for its programs. Founded in 1962 by American Evangelist Missionaries, Radio Maya de Barillas broadcasts a variety of health, educational and cultural programs designed for the Indian peasants in the northwest reaches of the country. Much of the programming is in the Indian language - K'anjobal. However, the station does broadcast daily in Spanish from 0230 - 0330 UTC. The station operates on 2,360 kHz from 1030 - 1500 UTC and 2230 - 0330 UTC and on 3,325 kHz from 1000 - 1500 UTC and 2200 - 0400 UTC. Both outlets use a 1 kilowatt transmitter. The 120 meter band channel is infrequently reported.

The station responds to reception reports with a short no data personal letter response from Baltazar Juan, Sub gerente. Address reception reports to the station at Radio Maya de Barillas, 13026 Barillas, Departamento de Huehuetenango, Guatemala.

Radio Buenas Nuevas (TGMI)

This station is a recent edition to the Guatemalan shortwave broadcasting scene. With only 250 watts this station commenced broadcasting on 25 July 1987 with only a provisional antenna. However, by the 28th of January of the next year they were running at 1,000 watts and their tower antenna was in service.

The station is owned by "La Iglesia Evangelica Nacional Mam C.A." which is a combination of 29 churches established in various sites in the departments of San Marcos, Huehuetanango and Quetzaltenango. Most of the 500,000 native residents in these areas speak Mam. Radio Buenas Nuevas itself is located near San Sebastian H. which is some 276 kilometers northwest of Guatemala City.

The station broadcasts on 4,800 kHz from 1200 - 1330 UTC in the mornings and from 2300 - 0100 UTC during the evenings. All programs are in the Mam language. However, the station does identify in Spanish. In the future Radio Buenas Nuevas hopes to add more programs in other languages indigenous to Guatemala.

The station has only three full-time employees. Israel Rodas M. is 36 years old, married and the father of four. He is the station manager ("Gerente") and verie signer for Radio Buenas Nuevas. The rest of the staff consists of Andres Maldonado Lopez, who is married with five children and 50 years old and Gonzalo Lopez R., who is married and 43 years old.

The station doesn't have its own QSL card. In the future they hope to have one, plus pennants. Reception reports should be addressed to Gerente Israel Rodas M. at Radio Buenas Nuevas, 13020 San Sebastian H., Huehuetenango, Guatemala.

Radio Chortis (TGCH)

Broadcasting on 3,380 kHz with a power of 1 kilowatt, Radio Chortis can be heard regularly during the North American winter. The station uses a Collins 20 V - 3 transmitter and a horizontal, half-wave dipole that is 21 meters in height.

The station's purpose is to broadcast cultural programs and to teach reading and writing. Some program themes include: primary reading, reading and writing, popular music and advise, religious features, agriculture, family, regional music with advise, and education or radio school programs ("escuelas radiofonicas"). The station signs on at 2200 UTC and closes down at 0300 UTC. The programming lineup is the same Monday through Friday with various variety features broadcast on Saturday and Sunday. Most of the programming is in Spanish.

Radio Chortis has two studios. One is used for daily broadcasting while the other serves as a production studio. Radio Netherlands donated the latter facility in 1980. Both studios are equipped with LSB console mixers, RCA microphones, Ampex ATR-700 open tape decks, Russco disc players and Technics M - 215 cassette tape decks. They also have a large sound proof room for live musical performances.

The stations "Director Ejecutivo", Juan Maria Boxus, responds to listeners reception reports with a full data form letter. Address reports to Radio Chortis y Escuelas Radiofonicas, Centro Social, Jocotan, Departamento de Chiquimula, Guatemala.

Radio Tezulutlan (TGTZ)

This station was founded on 15 January 1975 by Monsenor Juan Gerardi as a Catholic religious broadcaster. Its founder was the Bishop in Verapaz. Radio Tezulutlan is a Catholic station owned by the Iglesia Diocesano which supplies most of the stations operating funds.

In 1975 the station commenced operating on 4,835 kHz using a Marti Electronics RTP-1 Serie 1033 transmitter with 1 kilowatt into a half wave length antenna. Later in 1977 they carried out tests on 2,340 kHz which was designed to broadcast in Spanish, K'ekchi', and Pocomchi. There were few listeners to this 120 meter band outlet so regular broadcasts never materialized. By the end of 1977, the station began a 1 kilowatt transmission on 3,370 kHz. The frequencies of 4835 kHz and 3370 kHz are still in use today by the station. In 1980, the 60 meter band transmitter was replaced with an International Electronics 2500AX while the 90 meter band transmitter was replaced with an International Electronics 5000AX. The former is capable of 2.5/3 kilowatts while the latter is capable of up to 5 kilowatts.

It has long been a goal of the station to achieve separate programming on their two shortwave channels. However economic conditions haven't improved to the point of establishing these two services. Today when heard these frequencies operate in parallel. The stations programming consists of Catholic religious features, education, agriculture, health, social service, music, and general entertainment features. They broadcast from 1130 - 1600 UTC and from 2130 - 0230 UTC on the previously mentioned frequencies of 4,835 kHz and 3,370 kHz. The WRTH lists both channels at 1 kilowatt.

Radio Tezulutlan is a good verifier. They issue an English language, full data card in response to reports. Address reception reports to Radio Tezulutlan, Apartado 19, Coban, Departamento de Alta Verapaz, Guatemala.

Radio K'ekchi' (TGVC)

Another recent addition to the Guatemalan shortwave scene is Radio K'ekchi' in Alta Verapaz. David Daniell, "Asesor de Comunicaciones", has received reception reports from all parts of the world including Japan, West Germany, Holland, England, Italy, Paraguay, Canada, Mexico and the USA. Letters are very much appreciated by the staff of the station which includes Don Gilberto Sun Xicol, Gerente; Don Felix Och, Announcer and Treasurer; and Don Miguel Coc Macz, Announcer. These letters provide the station staff with emotional support and stimulus in their work.

Radio K'ekchi' is supported by the gifts of various radio schools and offerings of 135 congregations that are part of a cooperative Association of Baptist churches. Programming is in Spanish and K'ekchi'. Their programs try to communicate Christian values and to help the poor and needy. Included in the program line up is a contemporary Christian music show, bible dramas, preaching and teaching the bible. There are over 365,000 K'ekchi' in Guatemala.

Radio K'ekchi' began shortwave broadcasting on 11 March 1988 with a 250 watt transmitter. Today, Radio K'ekchi' uses a 5,000 watt Gates BP-5 transmitter and a dipole antenna. Studio equipment consists of a Tascam M-208 mixer and Tascam 22-b cassette players. Nearly all the stations programs are recorded on cassettes for later broadcast. They are hoping to achieve further improvements in clarity and in coverage.

Radio K'ekchi' broadcasts on 4,845 kHz from 1000 - 1500 UTC and 2200 - 0300 UTC Monday through Saturday and on Sunday from 1200 - 1500 UTC and 2100 - 0200 UTC. As mentioned previously, broadcasts are bilingual and they are directed to the K'ekchi' population. Reception reports are verified with a form letter and a nice "Certificado de Sintonia". Reports should be addressed to David Daniell at Radio K'ekchi', Fray Bartolome de las Casas, 16015 Alta Verapaz, Guatemala.

Radio La Voz de Atitlan (TGDS)

This station targets its programs to one of the smaller Indian groups, the Tzuthils which are located in the region around Lake Atitlan. Therefore, approximately 90% of its broadcasts are in Tzutuhuil and 10% are in Spanish. Programs consist of education, agriculture, health, music (folklore, marimba and ranchera) and an "avisos" service.

Until 1979, La Voz de Atitlan broadcast with an old US Army 610A transmitter capable of only 300 watts output. In 1979 they obtained, and remodelled, a IED 1000AX transmitter which is used in conjunction with a 35 meter 1/2 wave dipole antenna. They have two studios. The newer one was equipped through a donation by Radio Netherlands. It consists of a LPB S-15A console mixer, two open Ampex ATR-700 tape decks, and a LPB S-7A disk player. The older studio contains only a home brew console mixer.

The station has had an interesting history after its founding on 25 August 1968 by a Catholic Mission. In 1980, the Director, Gaspar Culan Yataz, was kidnapped by right wing military personnel and later found dead. Shortly thereafter, the station was robbed and much of the broadcasting equipment was taken. In 1982 the Federacion Guatemalteca de Educacion Radiofonica assisted the station to resume broadcasts. Unfortunately, broadcast time was sharply reduced from its previous schedule. Recently, the station has expanded its broadcast day. The current schedule is from 1130 - 1430 UTC and 2030 - 0130 UTC on 2,390 kHz. This station is rarely reported and is probably the most difficult of all the Guatemalan stations to hear.

The station's economic condition is very poor. There is no funding from any of the Catholic organizations in the country. Station personnel raise the necessary funds to keep the station on the air. Because of the poor economic condition of the station, La Voz de Atitlan is a poor verifier. Interestingly, they do have their own QSL card. Try addressing Spanish language reception reports with return postage to La Voz de Atitlan, Santiago Atitlan, Departamente de Solola, Guatemala.

Radio Nacional de Guatemala ("La Voz de Guatemala", TGWA, TGWC)

La Voz de Guatemala is a government owned station with an obligation to play as much of the national marimba music as possible. Unfortunately, they are rarely heard on shortwave.

Currently, only the stations 640 kHz frequency is in use. The USA made CSI 10 kilowatt transmitter for 9,760 kHz using a half-wave dipole and the 10 kilowatt Collins transmitter, which replaced an RCA transmitter in 1977, on 6,180 kHz are inactive. The latter frequency was operating through 1980 on a regular basis but irregular thereafter.

Radio Nacional de Guatemala offers a variety of music programs featuring the national music - marimba. At three minutes to the hour, a block of information including government announcements, program guides, and station identification is broadcast. News is broadcast only four times a day. To avoid political friction with neighboring countries, the contents of these newscasts are limited.

The station broadcasts 24 hours per day Monday through Friday and from 1055 - 0605 UTC on Saturday and from 1150 - 0610 UTC on Sunday. If it resumes shortwave activity watch 6,180 kHz for the distinctive sounds of marimba music. The station can be reached at Radio Nacional de Guatemala, 5a. Avenida 13 - 18, Zona 1, Guatemala City, Guatemala or through the Guatemala DX Club, Apartado 583, Guatemala City, Guatemala.

HONDURAS

This small Central American country is best known for its production of bananas. It is a very poor country with limited transportation facilities. The country became the site of clashes between troops of the Nicaraguan Sandinista government and Nicaraguan rebels ("contras"). The contras used Honduras as a base to stage raids into Nicaragua. The country is bordered by Guatemala to its west, El Salvador and the Pacific Ocean to the south, the Caribbean Sea to the north and Nicaragua to the east.

BROADCASTING IN HONDURAS

Most of the radio and television stations in the country are privately owned. One in three Hondurans owns a radio. About 150 thousand television sets serve a population of over 5 million people. There is an extensive array of medium wave broadcast stations in the country. There once were many shortwave broadcasters from Honduras. Today, shortwave radio plays a minor role in communications. The country has six daily newspapers.

Radio Luz y Vida (HRCP)

Radio Luz y Vida, or Radio Light and Life in English, began broadcasting in 1979 on 1,600 kHz using a converted Johnson Valiant ham transmitter into a 1/8 wave antenna. The operating power was just 50 watts. This enabled the station to have a range of 31 kilometers. Shortwave operations commenced in December 1980 using a Gates BC - 400 transmitter with many modifications. Current operations include a Gates BC - 1J transmitter with a power of one kilowatt for the tropical band outlet on 3,250 kHz. HRCP utilizes a G5RB antenna with a gain of 4 to 5 db. The antenna is aimed north and south.

Radio Light and Life is a Christian Radio Broadcaster. It is owned and operated by the Emanuell Church in Honduras, and is supported by Evangelistic Faith Missions which is headquartered in Bedford, Indiana, USA. A majority of the stations equipment has been donated by radio stations in the USA and other organizations related to the broadcast industry.

The station operates from 1200 - 1500 UTC and from 2200 - 0400 UTC, daily, with mainly Spanish language religious programs. English language programming is carried on Mondays from 0300 UTC to sign off. Verie signer Donald Moore is the manager and broadcast engineer of HRPC. He is an active radio amateur with the call sign WA5FFK/HR5. The stations closing announcements are made by Mr. Moore. English language reception reports with return postage in the form of mint stamps can be sent to him at Radio Luz y Vida, Apartado 303, San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

Sani Radio (HRR1)

In July 1986, test transmissions were heard from a new shortwave station in the town of Puerto Lempira, Gracias a Dios. Established by the International Rescue Committee with assistance from the United States Agency for International Development, Sani Radio broadcasts on a frequency of 4,755 kHz with ten kilowatts.

The name Sani comes from the Miskito Indian word for a vine that is used as string which children use to make a "telephone" by connecting two coconut halves. The word Sani combined with Radio has evolved into a slang expression for oral communication.

The station's inaugural program on August 25, 1986 featured live broadcasts attended by more than 200 local persons, as well as guests from the Honduran Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior and the United States AID Mission. HRR1's purpose is to provide Spanish, Miskito and Sumo language programs covering culture, education, entertainment, news and information, and public service broadcasts to the Miskito Indian population of the area. The station has nine employees doing the announcing, operating, writing and administrative work of the station. Various agreements expressly prohibit Sani Radio from transmitting partisan political or religious programs. Beginning in January 1987, Sani Radio was been operating under the administration of the Honduran agency AVANCE (Asociacion de Promocion y Desarolla Socio-Economico).

The transmitter is a Sintronic SI - A - 10 with ten kilowatts of power into a simple 30 meter long dipole antenna at a height of 15 meters. HRR1 broadcasts from 1200 - 1600 UTC and from 2100 - 0200 UTC. The station was an enthusiastic verifier when they first came on the air. However, the initial enthusiasm died down somewhat after many of the North Americans that set up the station left. Generally, the station is a good verifier. Spanish language reception reports with return postage can be sent to the stations Director, Lic. Jacinto Molina Gonzalez. Address all correspondence and QSL requests to Sani Radio, AVANCE, Apartado Postal No. 2040, Tegucigalpa, DC, Honduras.

La Voz Evangelica (HRVC)

Founded in 1960 as a medium wave station, this religious broadcaster entered the shortwave spectrum in 1965. They have operated consistently on 4,820 kHz over the years and put out a good signal with their five kilowatt Mission Engineering transmitter using a 1/2 wave dipole antenna. The primary target area is all of Central America during the evenings. During daylight they can reach into southern Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. A medium wave repeater is scheduled to be installed in Santa Rosa de Copan in Western Honduras. Perhaps the elimination of shortwave broadcasting is contemplated.

The station has three main studios where their programs are produced. Most of the programs are prerecorded. However, one studio is used for live music performances that are broadcasted. The station offers a variety of educational, cultural, music and religious programs in Spanish. From time-to-time, the station has carried programs in Miskito for the local Indian population. These features were produced by La Voz de la Mosquitia in Puerto Lempira. In addition, there is an English language segment, which is produced in the United States, that is broadcast once a week. The Sunday evening local time, or Monday UTC, broadcast at 0300 - 0400 UTC is easily heard and makes reception report details a little easier to gather.

Over the years, La Voz Evangelica has been a good verifier. Often it is the first Honduran verified by many DXers. Spanish language reception reports accompanied by return postage in the form of mint stamps should be addressed to the station at La Voz Evangelica, Apartado 145 - C, Tegucigalpa, D.C., Honduras.

La Voz de la Mosquitia (HRXK)

In 1981, a group of evangelical missionaries lead by Landon Wilkinson created the Global Outreach missionary station in northeast Honduras. It is a very small station with limited resources and is operated by announcer Leonardo Alvarez who also operates a craft shop in Puerto Lempira to support his family. Global Outreach, a Christian organization headquartered in Tupelo, Mississippi, wants to help people in developing countries help themselves.

The station operates on 4,910 kHz with just 300 - 500 watts of power. HRXX's basic schedule is from 1200 - 1500 UTC and from 0000 - 0300 UTC. The hours do vary. It broadcasts in three languages: Miskito, Spanish and English. The programs are cultural, educational, and religious. A recent newsletter mentioned that the station is doing the necessary paperwork for a permanent license. Apparently, they are operating under a provisional license.

Verifications are usually obtained through the organization's Executive Director Dr. Sammy Simpson in Tupelo. A prepared card is suggest since the station doesn't have its own QSL card. They do have a nice, small pennant. Address English language reports with mint stamps to Dr. Simpson at Global Outreach, La Voz de la Mosquita - HRXK, Box 1, Tupelo, MS 38802, USA. Spanish language reports can be sent direct to La Voz de la Mosquita - HRXK, Puerto Lempira, Honduras.

La Voz del Junco (HRMH5)

This station was founded in 1953 by Miguel Elias Hasbun Yacaman as a mediumwave and shortwave operation. The original shortwave transmitter was only 500 watts. At first it played all music. But shortly thereafter, as advertising revenue grew, it included news, information, radio novels and other cultural features. La Voz del Junco also carries religious programs on Sunday mornings.

In 1954, it obtained a Gates 750 watt shortwave transmitter. The old transmitter was kept for emergencies. With the new transmitter, the station began to receive reception reports from overseas. In 1980, the station ceased shortwave broadcasts as the transmitters useful life ended. By 1983, La Voz del Junco returned to shortwave with an 800 watt shortwave transmitter. The station was flooded with reception reports when they erected a new antenna while boosting power to one kilowatt. By 1985, the station has a five kilowatt shortwave transmitter in place. Its dipole antenna is located about a mile north of town.

La Voz del Junco operates on 6,075 kHz which, unfortunately, is a very crowded portion of the shortwave spectrum. Consequently, they are not frequently reported. During daylight operations the station covers all of Honduras and El Salvador and southern Guatemala. In the evening, interference from international broadcasters, who dominate the 49 meter band, hinders their coverage area. Besides Spanish, the station occasionally identifies in English and Japanese. The station operates from 1200 - 0430 UTC. Many of the news, commentary, radio plays, and musical programs are previously recorded in a highly used recording studio.

Despite its low commercial value, La Voz del Junco continues to operate on shortwave. The station is a good verifier. Owner and Gerente Miguel Elias Hasbun Yacaman enjoys the engineering aspects of shortwave transmissions. Also, he enjoys receiving listener reception reports. Address Spanish language reception reports with return postage in the form of mint stamps to La Voz del Junco, Frente al Parque central, Calle la Independencia, Santa Barbara, Honduras.

Radio Landia (HROX)

Radio Landia has been inactive through most of the 1980's. However, in late 1989 the station returned to the air for a brief period during the Honduran Presidential elections. Sporadic use of dormant shortwave facilities is not unusual in Honduras where the government is known to tell stations to use your license or lose it. Radio Landia apparently fired up their five kilowatt Collins transmitter with a 1/2 wave dipole antenna on 4,965 kHz to convince the government that they are still interested in shortwave. Unfortunately, the only way to hear Radio Landia is to be tuning the tropical bands when they make one of those infrequent appearances.

Founded in November 1968, Radio Landia operates from a very small studio in the town of Comayagua. It is connected to the transmitter site some 6 kilometers away by telephone line. Almost all of this commercial station's programming is music. Their schedule is 1000 - 0400 UTC Monday through Saturday and 1200 - 0100 UTC on Sunday.

This station is almost impossible to verify. Direct QSL's from the station are rare. The only known verifications were obtained by North American DXer Don Moore while travelling through the region and by Radio Luz Y Vida broadcaster Don Moore. Both obtained QSL's for other DXers too. If you do hear Radio Landia during one of its active periods try addressing Spanish language reports with mint stamps to Radio Landia, Calle Boulevard, Comayagua, Departamento de Comayagua, Honduras.

NICARAGUA

This country is the largest in Central America in area. It extends from the Pacific Ocean on the west to the Caribbean Sea to the east. It is bordered by Honduras to the north and Costa Rica to the south. About 60% of the country's almost 4 million people population live in the fertile regions on the Pacific coast where the capital city of Managua is located.

BROADCASTING IN NICARAGUA

The country is adequately covered through a network of domestic mediumwave stations controlled by the government. There are several privately owned radio stations. Shortwave coverage is limited. The government is represented on the international broadcast bands with its own station. Two privately owned stations cover sparsely populated regions of the country. All of the new commercial and religious broadcasting activity has been on medium wave and FM.

La Voz de Nicaragua

This is the only station operating in Central America with an "International Service" designed to reach an audience outside the region. La Voz de Nicaragua is the official government voice with an international service ("onda internacional").

The station uses a 50 kilowatt RCA transmitter that is fed through an FM link from studios in Managua. Most of the studio's RCA equipment predates the Sandinista take over, and replacement parts have been hard to come by because of economic sanctions against Nicaragua. This has forced the cut in the English service and curtailed broadcasting in general from this station.

La Voz de Nicaragua operates on 6,100 kHz from 1200 - 0100 UTC with Spanish programs. An English segment is listed in the WRTH from 0000 - 0100 UTC, excluding Mondays. Scheduling from La Voz de Nicaragua has been variable over the years with schedules lengthened and shortened without any notice. For a time in the early 1980's, this station verified listener reception reports with a friendly letter. However, times have changed and replies from the station are few. When it runs an English mailbag feature, letters and reception reports are read over the air. Obviously, reports are getting through but the station's resources are severely constrained. You can try sending Spanish language reception reports to the station's Director of "Onda Corta", Freddy Lopez Quiroz at La Voz de Nicaragua, Apartado 3170, Managua, Nicaragua.

Radio Zinica

During most of the 1970's, a private station called Radio Atlantico operated from the facilities of what we now know as Radio Zinica. The station's owner Raul Tinajero was purged by Sandinistas after they assumed control of Nicaragua. In December 1979, Radio Zinica took to the air playing Christmas carols with Spanish and English announcements.

Bluefields is a remote town along the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua. Like Costa Rica's Atlantic coast, this area was settled by black Jamicans. Shortwave is the only way to communicate effectively in this vast, swampy, and underdeveloped region. The station uses an Elcor transmitter capable of 5 kilowatts output. However, it rarely uses more than 2 kilowatts. Radio Zinica broadcasts on 6,120 kHz from 1100 - 0500 UTC. The station's transmitter was originally ordered by the former owner/operator. Mr. Tinajero had been using a 1000 watt Nicaraguan made transmitter for Radio Atlantico. A new Elcor transmitter was paid for and awaiting delivery to Bluefields when the Sandinistas came to power. The new "owners" inherited a new transmitter and some other new equipment.

Since Radio Japan began broadcasting from Sackville on 6,120 kHz, there have been few reports of Radio Zinica. Patience became the key to logging this station. On October 22, 1988, the shortwave transmitter was destroyed by Hurricane Joan. Perhaps the station will return to shortwave if replacement equipment can be obtained. Although a poor verifier over the years, if you should log this one try sending a report to the station's Director Arturo J. Valdez R. at Radio Zinica, Apartado 25, Bluefields, Nicaragua.

Radio Sandino

The station was founded in 1977 as the Voice of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). It was the radio voice of the FSLN's effort to overthrow the Somoza government established in Nicaragua. Although claiming a Nicaraguan location, Radio Sandino was reported to be broadcasting in Costa Rica. When Somoza left Nicaragua in July 1979, the station held an on the air celebration. Shortly after the celebration, the station's name was given to a medium wave outlet in Managua. A shortwave outlet was established in the 49 meter band.

Radio Sandino was a typical clandestine operation in its early years. They broadcast advisories to the foreign community to get out of the country. The usual guerilla fare of explaining the use of M - 1 rifles, the preparation and use of Molotov cocktails and messages on how to execute members of the government were issued. After becoming a legitimate station, Radio Sandino's programming switched to news and information, music, radio dramas and sports.

There have been very few reports of Radio Sandino in recent years. The station has been reported as inactive due to the unavailability of spare parts for the shortwave transmitter. Its 50 kilowatt medium wave channel on 750 kHz is well heard throughout Central America thereby making the reactivation of the shortwave outlet unnecessary. However, watch 6,200 kHz between 1100 - 0130 UTC for a possible return to shortwave for Radio Sandino. Recently, Martha Lorena Castillo, Assistant Direccion General has responded to requests for verifications. Address Spanish

language reports with return postage to Radio Sandino, Audio de la Revolucion, Paseo Tiscapa, Managua, Nicaragua.

SUMMARY

The six Central American shortwave countries represented on shortwave provide ample opportunity for the serious DXer to fatten his shortwave stations heard and verified totals. Overall, the shortwave stations of this region are better than average verifiers.

Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras provide the most opportunities and challenges. There are no international government voices presently operating from this region. Recent additions have been mainly religious broadcasters.

Costa Rica fills the airwaves with a blend of commercial, religious, quasi-clandestine and educational broadcasters which provides a diverse assortment of programming from this country. Guatemala offers a number of interesting and exotic shortwave stations to challenge any DXers ability. The diverse cultural backgrounds of the various Mayan Indian descendants, the wide range of musical styles, and the many Indian languages used by Guatemalas shortwave broadcasters make this country an interesting and challenging country to DX. Honduras is past its peak for shortwave activity. However, from time-to-time a familiar voice reappears which stirs some excitement in the DX community.

Future prospects for more shortwave additions are mixed. Radio Exterior de Espana intends to build a relay facility in Costa Rica. Guatemala will probably see more religious stations setting up shop in the untouched remote regions of the country. Perhaps Nicaragua offers the most opportunity for change as a consequence of the elections held earlier this year. All in all, the future for shortwave broadcasting in Central America reflects the trends of this region over the years - uncertain! In any case, enjoy the interesting, diverse blends of music and culture that Central America has to offer through shortwave radio.

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