

IT'S IN THE FAMILY ECUADOR ON SHORTWAVE

Richard McVicar, HC1JMN

When one pulls the atlas off the shelf and examines Ecuador, one sees that this Andean republic on the equator is a relatively small country. When one begins to *experience* Ecuador, however, the country seems to grow. Each area is so different from the next. For example, it is sometimes possible to roll a fair-sized snowball together at the pass near Papallacta and, an hour later, be sweating under the tropical heat near Baeza patiently waiting to spot a toucan. A restless traveller who enjoys inspiring scenery and incredible change could spend months (at least) in Ecuador before wanting to move on.

The DXer knows that each country's broadcasting service has its own identity. Likewise in Latin America, each country has this distinct broadcasting "flavour". The more one listens to the stations between the Río Grande and Base Esperanza, the sharper one's taste will become. It is my hope that the pages ahead will help you sense the special flavour of Ecuadorian radio--a family of broadcasters in turn largely run by broadcasting families.

THE BEGINNING THE CORDOVEZ FAMILY: RADIO EL PRADO

The history of Ecuadorian radio is a fascinating tapestry of pioneerism and family relationships. It was within the Cordovez family, and with Carlos Cordovez in particular, that the first radio waves in this Andean nation were launched.

Carlos Cordovez Borja was brought up in Riobamba where his family made a comfortable living operating the El Prado mill. The means were available for Carlos to go to the U.S.A. and gain a degree in engineering at Yale. Before returning to Ecuador, the young man worked several years as an engineer with RCA.

Soon after his return home in 1924, one of the professors at Riobamba's San Felipe High School proposed an interesting scientific experiment--building a small shortwave transmitter and receiver. The transmitter would be installed at the El Prado factory and the receiver at the high school. Students from the school took part in the experimental broadcast and were heard clearly at the receiving end by parents, officials and interested listeners. This took place early in 1925 and was the first shortwave transmission in Ecuador. The transmitter was rated at 25 watts and operated on a frequency in the 60 meter band.

After getting on the air with a stronger shortwave transmitter in 1929, Carlos invited local music groups to come to the El Prado mill and perform on the lawn just outside the radio room. Having no equipment to record music, Carlos carried his microphone outside and broadcast the music around the world for a few hours each week. In this way Cordovez turned his amateur station into a broadcasting service. *Radio Estadio El Prado* made its transmissions official on June 13 1929. Several dignitaries were present at the ceremony, including María Elvira Campi de Yoder, president of the Red Cross, and Coronel Alberto Enríquez Gallo, chief of the Riobamba military district. The call letters were SE1FG (Ecuador had not yet been assigned the HC call).

Radio El Prado was extremely popular around Riobamba, as well as in other parts of Ecuador and even outside of the country. Carlos' wife, Judith Nolivos de Cordovez, became the first female radio announcer and amateur radio operator in Ecuador. She was especially loved and, it is said, her sweet voice moved several distant listeners to send in marriage proposals. (If you have issues of *Radio News* magazine from back then, you'll find loggings of *Radio El Prado* on 6200 kHz and on "approximately 19 meters" each Sunday from 4 to 5 PM EST. Reports indicated that a certain Sunday's programming would be directed towards certain countries.)

Radio El Prado had an important part in helping HCJB get on the air for its first program on Christmas Day, 1931. On Christmas Eve, during some of the final tests, a power rectifier tube burned out and there were no spares anywhere in Quito. The only hope was at *Radio El Prado* in Riobamba, about 120 miles away. A messenger was sent on the 12-hour drive to see if Carlos could supply a replacement. Carlos took the tube from his own transmitter and loaned it to Clarence Jones, one of HCJB's co-founders. The *Voice of the Andes* was able to go ahead with its inaugural program as scheduled. (HCJB was the first regularly licensed broadcasting station in Ecuador.)

Radio El Prado closed down in 1939 when the owners settled in the United States. The *Radio El Prado* of today, also in Riobamba, signed on in the late 1950s. At first there was some disagreement concerning rights to the famous name, but both parties worked out a settlement where the *El Prado* name could live on. The current *Radio El Prado* is owned and managed by the Vizcaino family and operates with 1 kw on 980 kHz.

During his remaining years in Ecuador, Carlos Cordovez lived near Quito and was well-known throughout the world for his amateur radio activity. The "pioneer of Ecuadorian radio" passed away in 1972. His nephew, Diego Cordovez, is the Ecuadorian Foreign Minister at the time of this writing.

THE ORIENTE THE QUINGA FAMILY: RADIO CUMANDA

One of Ecuador's most fascinating shortwave broadcasters is *Radio Cumandá*--intriguing because of its location--far from Quito in the eastern jungles of Napo province. The name of the town it's in is officially called *Puerto Francisco de Orellana* (named after an explorer,) but more commonly known as *Coca*.

Coca is an eight-hour drive from Quito in the heart of Ecuador's oil-producing region in the *Oriente* (East). There are a number of small villages on the way, including Santa Rosa, home of *Radio Interoceánica*, and El Dorado, home of one of Ecuador's largest and highly invisible *sleeping policemen* (a speed bump). As with the worst of speed bumps, the dusty serpentine monster at El Dorado is located next to a roadside

café. This is (I speculate) to provide entertainment to patrons: As the unknowing *Quiteño* traverses this bump at 50 mph, diners at the café are visibly entertained by the sight of strangers having their heads whacked against the roof of the vehicle. (A rear wheel spring may clank to the road three miles later.)

The presence of the oil industry in the region becomes apparent as soon as one starts south on the road from Lago Agrio to Coca. Oil coats the highway--not a polite smattering to keep the dust down, but rather a gooey sludge that has been known to almost completely cover vehicles if there has been a recent rain. A sizeable snake or two may be seen winding its way across this road. The scenery is gorgeously green as one passes houses on stilts, a few villages and the odd oil well where a bright orange flame burning off gas looks like sunset through the trees. Two rivers to cross are the *Aguarico* and the *Coca*. Good bridges pass over both of these large waterways.

Ecuador's major tributary into the Amazon, the *Napo*, borders Coca on the south, while the Coca river runs by to the east of town. From a bridge going over the Napo, one can see where the two wide Amazon-bound rivers meet.

On the road into Coca, the first-time visitor is surprised to discover huge corporate buildings owned by the oil companies. The contrast is striking: After having driven through miles of jungle, one passes luxurious mowed lawns, tennis courts and the odd swimming pool.

Radio Cumandá is on the western edge of town in a long wooden building that is also a radio repair store and a home. It's not easy to find at night, as there is very little lighting on the street. Two of my HCJB friends and I decided to go on a weekend adventure and arrived there on a Friday night around eight. There were three employees present, along with Señora Mercedes Araujo de Quinga, the wife of *Radio Cumandá's* owner, and mother of *Radio Cumandá's* manager, Marco Quinga. We enjoyed a "summer evening at the cottage with Mom" kind of evening as one broadcaster played records and the rest of us sat around having a good chat. (They even interviewed us on the air!)

Radio Cumandá is, at this writing, the newest shortwave operation in Ecuador, having gone on the air August 1, 1990. The station had actually been a dream of the Quinga family for over a decade. José J. Quinga and his family live just south of Quito in the Andean town of Machachi. About 12 years ago, they had a wish to start a radio station in Coca, Coca being an area they liked to visit. The station, to be called *Ecos de Orellana* was built in Machachi and there were several on-air tests made. During this testing stage, the station was very well-liked by the residents of Machachi. Enjoying their new radio station, the townsfolk expressed their desire that *Ecos de Orellana* not be moved to Coca. At the same time, the Quingas were having second thoughts about locating the station in far-



Motorized canoe, the major means of transport on the Napo river.



Announcer Angel Bonilla.

away Coca as the new jungle town really didn't have sufficient commercial establishments to sustain a radio station. The outcome: *Ecos de Orellana* would remain in Machachi. That is how a station with a name associated with Ecuador's *Oriente* came to be located high in the Andes, almost under Mount Cotopaxi's shadow. It is now called *Radio Orellana* and operates on 1580 kHz with 1 kw. Señora Quinga said *Radio Orellana* has a very fancy QSL certificate.

Radio Cumandá is named after the novel *Cumandá*, written by Ecuadorian Juan León Mera and first published in 1879. (León Mera also penned the Ecuadorian national anthem.) It's a beautifully sad tale about a family in the jungles of eastern Ecuador where the heroine, Cumandá, becomes lost and...well, that's another story.

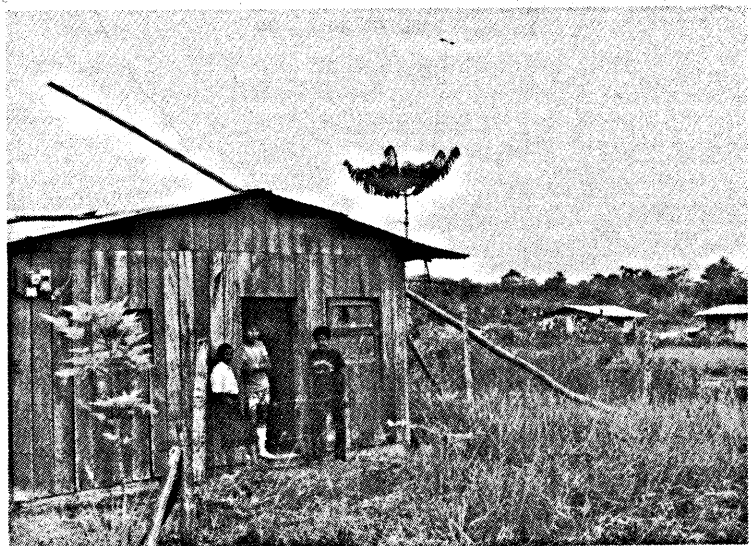
Programming on *Radio Cumandá* is both musical and cultural. There are "mini-programs" especially dedicated towards the health of children, women's rights, the protection of nature, as well as music. A typical day's schedule looks like this:

- 6 AM sign on to 8 AM---Ecuadorian folk music.
- 8-Noon--pop and "tropical" music (salsas, cumbias, etc.) mixed with short programs as those described above.
- Noon-1 PM---news, including a broadcast of HCJB's Spanish news. (Many stations around Ecuador tune in HCJB's midday news at 12:30 on 6050 kHz, patch this through their own control boards and broadcast it over their own station. José "Chema" Reinoso, director of HCJB's Spanish language service comments, "If they're listening to HCJB somehow, amen!")
- 1-to sign off around 10 PM---various types of music, mixed with more mini-programs.

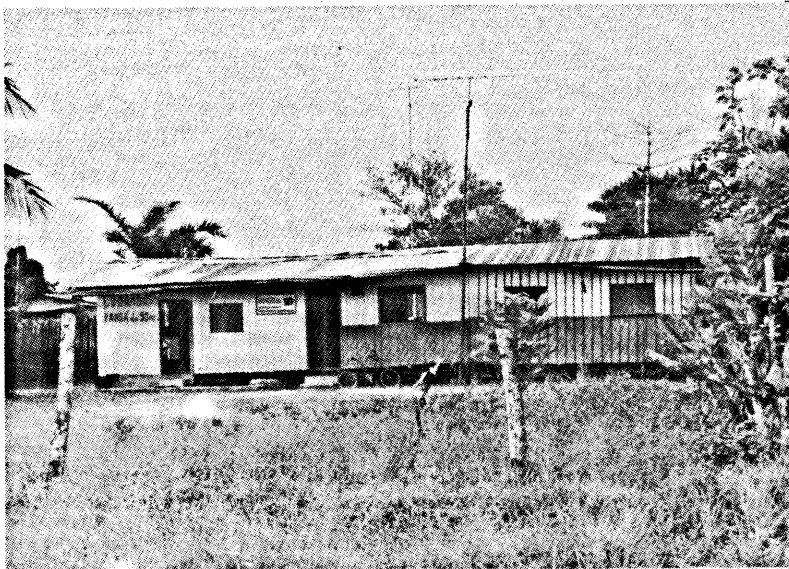
Radio Cumandá first began operating on 3332 kHz, 90 meters, and later changed to 3351 kHz (their assigned frequency is 3350 kHz). Señora Quinga and her son Marco believe that most of their listeners live outside of the actual town of Coca. Within town limits, radio owners are more accustomed to mediumwave (their competition is *Radio Francisco de Orellana* on 1030 kHz) and FM (a couple of FM stations in Lago Agrio are audible.) *Radio Cumandá* does have plans to add an FM frequency at some future date when the station is better established. There are no plans to operate on mediumwave.

In a shack about three blocks away from the studio, an Ecuadorian-made short-wave transmitter quietly hums as it produces a signal on 3351 kHz. Marco estimated the power to be 800 watts. A voltage surge in the autumn of 1991 burned-out part of *Cumandá's* transmitter but the station has been back on irregularly since the beginning of 1992. The 90 meter band dipole antenna is supported on one side by a lofty eucalyptus pole. The other end is affixed to a not-so-lofty eucalyptus pole which is strapped to the top of a tall power line pole to make up the difference. (A tall new eucalyptus pole for this latter end patiently leans on the transmitter shack waiting to be put up.)

The Quinga's are optimistic that Coca, quickly growing with the oil industry, will soon contain enough stores and businesses to help give *Radio Cumandá* a



Sra. Quinga, son Marcos and Angel at the transmitter building.



The *Radio Cumandá* building.

stronger economic foothold. At the moment though, *Radio Cumandá* is still a hobby of the Quinga family. Mom and Dad take care of the larger *Radio Orellana* in Machachi while son Marco looks after the fledgling broadcaster in the jungle.

Reception reports have arrived from Costa Rica, Brazil, Florida and Quito. Marco now knows exactly what a DXer is and what we...er...*enthusiastic* hobbyists are asking for. The surest way to get a letter to *Radio Cumandá* is to send your report via *Radio Orellana* in Machachi. As she was doing during our visit, Señora Quinga makes bi-monthly flights to Coca to check-in on her son at *Cumandá* and takes the station's mail with her. Here is the address:

Radio Cumandá
 c/o Radio Orellana
 Luis Cordero 226
 Machachi
 Provincia de Pichincha
 Ecuador



Radio Cumandá sign near the highway.



Prov. Napo Cantón Fca. Orellana (Coca)

RADIO "CUMANDA"

COMUNICACION ALTERNATIVA AL SERVICIO DEL ECUADOR
 MUSICAL - NOTICIOSA - CULTURAL Y DEPORTIVA

ONDA LARGA

ONDA CORTA 3.350 Khz. En la banda de 90 mts.

Teléfonos: 315-089 - 315-286

THE SIERRA

THE MENA FAMILY: LA VOZ DE SAQUISILI-RADIO LIBERTADOR

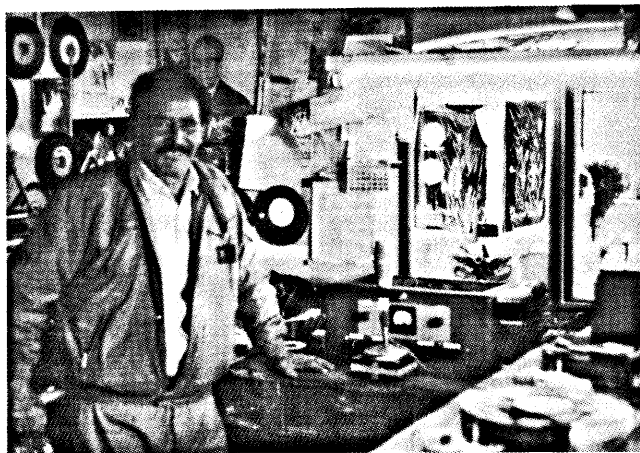
The Andes run through the middle of Ecuador from north to south and are made up of two main ranges. Between these two ranges is a high valley, named the *Avenue of the Volcanos* by German explorer Alexander von Humboldt. A traveller passing through the Ecuadorian Andes would agree that this is the perfect name as, going from Colombia towards Peru, he would on his left side pass such volcanic, snow-covered giants as *Cayambe*, *Antisana*, *Cotopaxi*, *Tungurahua*, *El Altar* and *Sangay*. On his right, going from north to south are *Cotacachi*, *Pichincha*, the *Ilinizas*, *Carihuairazo*, and *Chimborazo* (the highest, at 20,703 feet). All through the central valley are lively, colourful towns and one of the liveliest (and most colourful) is Saquisilí.

Saquisilí is known throughout Ecuador for its Thursday market. People from many hard to reach villages travel to Saquisilí to buy and sell animals, vegetables, fruits and just about any household item one could think of. In the large *18 de Octubre* plaza, townsfolk and tourists examine everything from plantains to beautiful woven bags and wall hangings to hammers and other tools. What stood-out to us the most was a row of about eight male tailors sitting at their sewing machines right out in the middle of the plaza.

La Voz de Saquisilí-Radio Libertador is right across the street from this plaza. From the station's balcony, one can look east over the market and beyond to the cold snows of the highest active volcano in the world, *Cotopaxi*. On a favourable day, one can also see the white alpine-like peaks of the *Ilinizas* to the north.

My wife, Lisa, our baby daughter, Rachel and I visited the station on a Thursday just after lunch. Not finding the actual studios right away (only a sign hanging across the road), I poked my head into a small grocery store and asked directions. The kindly woman running the store turned out to be the wife of the station's owner, Professor Vicente Arturo Mena Herrera. *La Voz de Saquisilí-Radio Libertador* was right over the store in the same building. Professor Mena took us upstairs for a good chat, some *Fruit* (an Ecuadorian soft drink) and a tour of the station. (With that soft-drink reminder, you may be wondering how often an Ecuadorian drinks *Inca Kola*, the yellow Andean pop drink famous throughout the SWBC DXing community. Well, not very often, at least in Quito. Nudged-out of the local market by *Coke* and *Fanta*, *Inca Kola* is no longer available in northern Ecuador. If the *Quiteño* DXer is simply *salivating* over the thought of 10 ounces of the bubble-gum-flavoured stuff, he can travel to Guayaquil or Cuenca for a bottle.)

One word that comes to mind when thinking of Professor Mena is *energy*. A native of Saquisilí, the professor is also larger than most Ecuadorians, accentuating his prominent role in the town as a teacher at the local high school and broadcaster. It was this same Professor Mena who founded *La Voz de Saquisilí* 28 years ago. The station went on the air using the single frequency of 4900 kHz, the same shortwave frequency they use today.



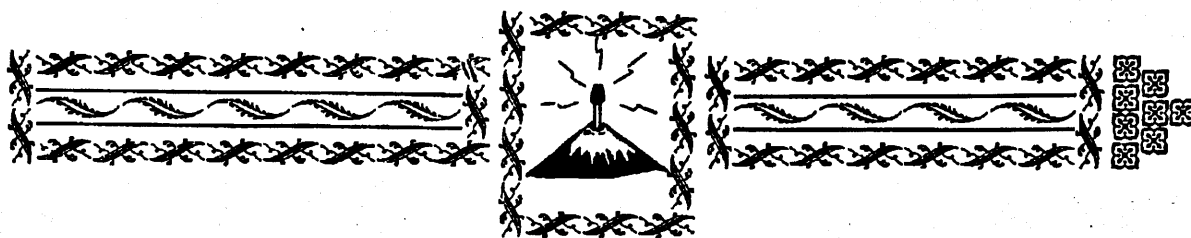
Professor Mena in the studio.



Immediately successful, *La Voz de Saquisilí* added to the thriving economy of the town, both a market and a tourist center.

Ever since the beginning, it has been the intention of *La Voz de Saquisilí* to reach all parts of the country. Professor Mena explains, "There are a group of Saquisilí natives who now live all over Ecuador and they were very happy to be able to begin tuning in to their home town." Another reason for starting the station was to put people in touch with one another, as there weren't any telephones. "The people were very ready to listen to our new station!"

Three years after *La Voz de Saquisilí* went on the air, another broadcaster, *Radio Libertador*, signed on using the mediumwave frequency of 600 kHz. Later, about 12 years ago, it moved to 1235 kHz. The



RADIODIFUSORAS
"La Voz de Saquisilí y Libertador"

two stations were a partnership between Professor Mena and his relative Arcillo Corrales. When Corrales pulled out of the arrangement in the late 1970's, Mena made arrangements to buy *Radio Libertador* and unite Saquisilí's two stations. Both would then carry the same programming and retain a combined name.

Saquisilí's shortwave broadcaster has definitely been a family operation over the years. In 1979, when Clayton Howard interviewed Professor Mena, he also met the professor's son, Byron, who was announcing. Two other children, Edwin and Vicky, also took turns in the studio.

La Voz de Saquisilí-Radio Libertador begins the day with *El Alegre Amanecer* (the happy wake-up) with Ecuadorian folk music. There are also messages from one family to another and many commercials. (One hears Professor Mena himself on the air most mornings doing both live announcing and taped commercials.) Later, they have news followed by pop music. At 12:30 PM the station airs HCJB's midday Spanish news. There is a little bit of everything in *Saquisilí's* programming--sports, commercials, and religious broadcasts. 1235 kHz is on the air from 6 AM until 10 PM. 4900 kHz is usually on only until 10 in the morning. On special occasions, they will leave the shortwave transmitter on all day.

The shortwave transmitter runs at about 1 kw while they use 500 watts on 1235 kHz. Professor Mena said the 4900 kHz transmitter has better equipment and puts out a more reliable signal. Both transmitters were assembled in Quito by a local engineer, Fred Simon. The transmitters are based outside of Saquisilí and are connected to the studios by private landlines.

Professor Mena is familiar with the DXing hobby and appreciates the letters, tapes, unused Ecuadorian stamps and US dollars that the station receives. The staff is very small, however, and we noticed only one small desk with a typewriter in the office. (What I'm leading to is that it may take patience and several follow up reports before being rewarded with a verification letter.)

With Professor Mena's energy and interest in reaching all of Ecuador with *La Voz de Saquisilí-Radio Libertador's* signals, I think DXers will be able to listen to this Andean broadcaster for years to come.

La Voz de Saquisilí y Libertador
Calle 24 de Mayo No. 675
Saquisilí
Provincia de Cotopaxi
Ecuador

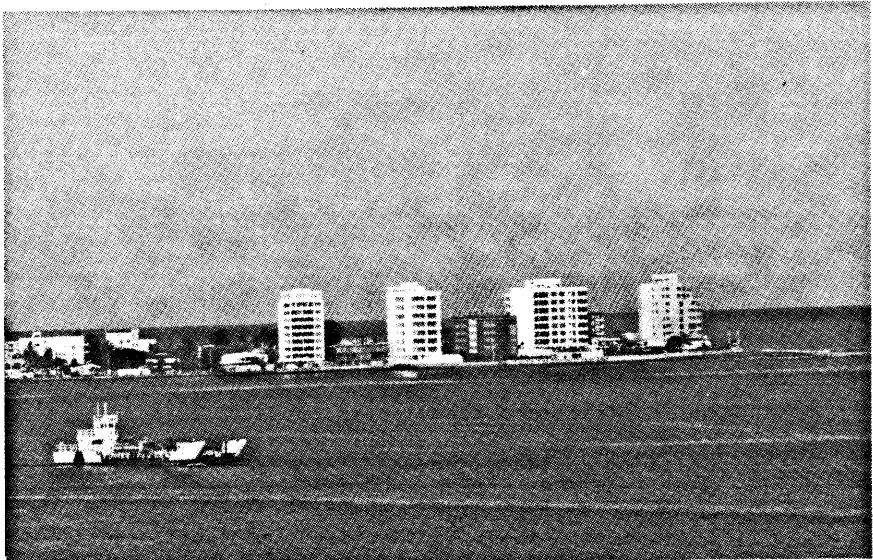


At *La Voz de Saquisilí* one sees Mount Cotopaxi overlooking the Saquisilí Market.

THE COAST

THE NEVAREZ FAMILY: LA VOZ DE LOS CARAS

Bahía de Caráquez is a beautiful small port of about 13,000 inhabitants located where the Chone River meets the Pacific Ocean. Behind the houses on the road heading toward Bahía, are what could be described as "water fields"-square areas boxed in by stones. These are shrimp farms and one certainly has the opportunity to taste their product in the local restaurants. Several islands in the Chone River are covered with thousands upon thousands of birds--storks, gulls and, boasting an enormous bright red mating pouch, the frigatebird (usually associated solely with the Galapagos Islands.) Playful dolphins and hungry pelicans often make friends with the fishermen in the smaller boats on the Río Chone.



Bahía de Caráquez, as seen from San Vicente.

At the main dock in Bahía, the importance of the fishing industry is apparent by the number of fishing boats, nets and the smell of fresh fish in the humid air. If one stands here and looks north across the Río Chone, one sees the more rustic village of San Vicente. Turning around, he is again surrounded by the business of Bahía life--grocery stores, pharmacies, banks, restaurants, auto-repair shops and so on. To the left of the dock and across the

street is the *Casa Americana*, a long building with several unmarked doorways. However, there is one doorway that has a bright, round sign and is as noticeable to a DXer as an airmail envelope amidst advertising fliers. That doorway leads to *La Voz de los Caras*.

La Voz de los Caras was named after the Caras Indians, one of the two dominant tribes in Ecuador about 900 years ago. They are known as *La Patria de la nacionalidad Ecuatoriana* (The fathers of the Ecuadorian people) and lived in this coastal region of the country.

In the early 1940's, Bahía de Caráquez, then a very remote fishing village, was able to boast of having a network of transmitters used for medical purposes. This network was put together by a Dr. Parker, who was also an amateur radio operator. One of these transmitters operated on 4710 kHz with 120 watts. In 1946, after Dr. Parker had passed away, the equipment was purchased by a group of six men, including Alejandro Nevárez Pinto. It was with this purchase that the actual radio station *La Voz de los Caras* began. Their first day on the air was June 21, 1946 and the frequency was 4795 kHz, the same frequency they use today. Señor Nevárez was the one partner in *La Voz de los Caras* who was truly interested in the radio medium and he eventually bought-out the other original investors. The station has always been in the same building.



The entrance to La Voz de los Caras.



Father and son: Alejandro and Marcelo Nevárez.

Señor Nevárez explains that, back then, operating such a radio station was a hobby. Bahía didn't have the businesses to sustain a commercial station. As with the Saquisilí area, there were no telephones in the region and people were happy to have the station to relay messages from family to family, friend to friend. The station has always operated on shortwave with the purpose of covering the immediate area as well as Manabí province and indeed all of Ecuador.

La Voz de los Caras operated solely on shortwave for 43 years, having added FM (95.3 MHz) in 1991. When asked about the feasibility of using shortwave, Señor Nevárez explained that most people in the villages and farms in their main target area are still more familiar with shortwave than with FM. He added that they wouldn't really

know what "60 meters" meant, but that it was just a type of radio that they were used to. Señor Nevárez is confident that this will be the case for a number of years to come. Unlike many broadcast stations in Ecuador, *La Voz de los Caras* has people who consider their shortwave frequency a top priority and quickly repair the transmitter if something goes wrong. I think the main reason for this is Señor Nevárez and his son, Marcelo. Marcelo is the station's director and engineer. Both he and his father really know their stuff, the two having gained experience in solid state electronics in New Orleans. Marcelo is full of the same kind of enthusiasm and love for radio as his father.

The shortwave transmitter operates on 4795 kHz with five kilowatts and is Ecuadorian-made. An inverted V-dipole is used for an antenna and, together with the transmitter, is located on a hill overlooking the city. *La Voz de los Caras* has a relatively well-equipped studio containing a Peavy console, several CD players and turntables.

Daily programming at *La Voz de los Caras* consists of such programs as *News of the Shore*, *Hermano Pablo* and the BBC's *Science of the Day* in the morning. Afternoon shows include *Musical Tablecloth*, *Listeners Club* and *A Talk with the People of the Country* (Agricultural). After the evening meal you can catch *Refreshing Waters*, the news, *Musical Impacts*, *Melodías de Arrabal* (Tangos) and the BBC News. A popular weekend program is *Remembranzas*, an oldies request program where listeners call in from all over the country. At one time Señor Nevárez tried airing folk music from the Andes but listeners complained. They said it was too depressing.

On the walls of the office are all kinds of banners and postcards from DXers worldwide. Reception reports are a pleasure for them to receive. (Again though, patience is needed for a reply.)

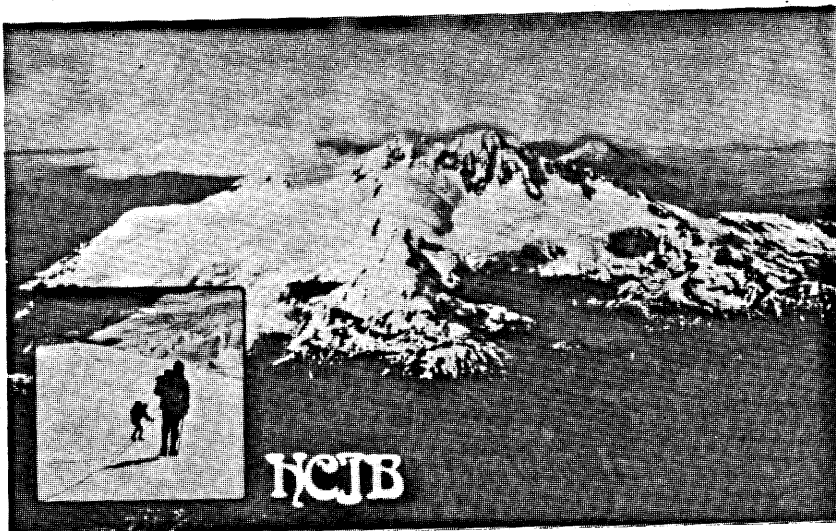
The address is:
 La Voz de los Caras
 Apartado Postal 608
 Bahía de Caráquez
 Provincia de Manabí
 Ecuador



ACTIVE SHORTWAVE STATIONS IN ECUADOR

Since station schedules tend to bend and stretch a lot, I haven't been too careful in listing every sign on and sign off time. Sign on is often at 1100 UTC, although some stations start their day earlier. If the station doesn't stay on SW all day, they will probably fire up the SW transmitter again around 2100-2300 UTC and keep it going until sign off anywhere from 0100 to 0500 UTC. Unless otherwise noted, each station is on SW during both local mornings and evenings.

3220 HCJB (Pifo) (10 kw), Casilla 17-17-691, Quito; Director of Quichua Services: José Naula. (*Quichua* is how one spells the language in Ecuador.) The world's pioneer missionary broadcaster first went on the air Christmas Day, 1931. Today, missionaries and staff from over 20 countries serve at HCJB in Quito. This Christian multi-denominational station is funded by interested churches and individuals around the world. In 1978, a delegation of Christian Quichuas requested more than the 50 program hours a week in Quichua that HCJB was able to supply. They and others who wished to help, raised the funds to build two



10 kw transmitters especially for the Quichua service, one on 90 meters (3220) and one for 49 meters (6080). Final assembly was completed in 1979. Programs include *Mixed Grains*, a popular breakfast show at dawn, local and international news, Bible reading and studies, history of the ancestors of the Quichua people, and music.

3240 Radio Antena Libre (1 kw), Casilla 65, Esmeraldas, Prov. de Esmeraldas; Director: Señor Luis E. Velasco León; Owned by the Roman Catholic Church, this station began broadcasting in December 1978. Some of their programs have included *Here, those of the countryside, Latin America sings, Bible space*, radio dramas or novelas, and newscasts. Because of technical problems, *Radio Antena Libre* was off 3240 kHz for all of 1991. In February 1992 they returned with a few sporadic tests but haven't been heard here in Quito since then.

3270 Ecos del Oriente (1 kw), Mariscal Sucre 148 y 12 de Febrero, Lago Agrio, Prov. de Sucumbíos; Director: Marcelo Velástegui F.; A commercial broadcaster, *Ecos del Oriente* is on the air mornings and evenings with both pop and folk music and plenty of commercials. They are interested in DX reports and have a *Certificado de Honor QSL* that demands framing!

3280 La Voz del Napo (2.5 kw), Misión Josefina, Tena, prov. del Napo; Director: P. Rostagno. The "Voice of the Napo," is Catholic-run and broadcasts religious and cultural programming to listeners in the Ecuadorian east. *La Voz del Napo* has traditionally been DXer-friendly and has a winner of a pennant.



3286 *La Voz del Río Tarqui* (350 watts), La Mar y Montalvo, Cuenca, Prov. de Azuay; Director: Manuel Pulla C. This commercial station has been very active during the first half of 1992, but has been known to be off SW for months at a time. They usually pull the plug about 0100 UTC without any prior announcement.

3290 *Radio Centro-Estación 112*, (500 watts), Casilla 18-01-0574, Ambato, Prov. de Tungurahua; Director: Luis A. Gamboa Tello. *Radio Centro* has been on SW since December 22, 1989. They are on all night: 2200-1300 UTC on 3290 kHz. Programming is varied with *News of the new day*, *Centro Sports*, *Midnight-Ecuador*, *Ecuador sings its songs* and *Dear Mother*, a program of romantic Ecuadorian music. There are also sports programs.

3325 *Ondas Quevedeñas* (1.5 kw), 12va. Calle No. 207, Quevedo, Prov. de Los Ríos. Director: Humberto Alvarado P. A burnt-out transformer kept this station off the air for all of 1991. They returned around the beginning of May 1992.

3351 *Radio Cumandá* (around 800 watts), c/o Radio Orellana, Luis Cordero 226, Machachi, Prov. de Pichincha. Director: Marco Quinga. (See separate article.)

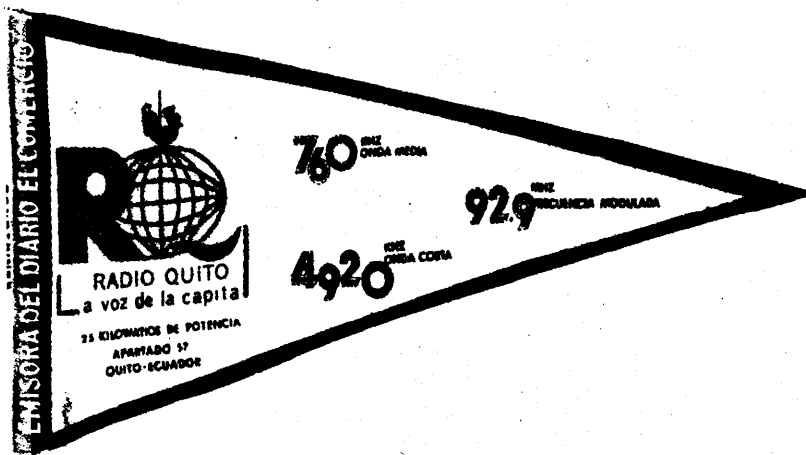
3395 *Radio Católica-Santo Domingo* (10 kw), Calles Ibarra y Babahoyo, Santo Domingo de los Colorados, Prov. de Pichincha. Director: Padre Cesario Tiestos. In the autumn of 1991, *Radio Zaracay* sold its MW (965 kHz) and SW (3395 kHz) transmitters and frequency rights to the growing *Radio Católica* network. (*Radio Zaracay* continues on FM from Sto. Domingo and Quito, but from different studios.) Programs on 3395/965 are often the same as on *Radio Católica Nacional* in Quito on 5030/880, but there are also programs direct from Santo Domingo with the above ID. At the moment, they only seem to be on in the local evening (typically around 2300-0300 UTC) when they are on SW at all.



4679 *Radio Nacional Espejo* (5 kw), Apartado 352, Quito; Director: Marco Caicedo A. One of the long-timers in Ecuadorian broadcasting, R-N-E began in 1949. The station has a tradition of *radionovelas*, radio soap operas. If you tune in to them today, chances are you will hear husbands and wives having arguments, threats, revelations, gossip and melodramatic organ riffs. Was off the air on SW for more than half of 1991 and currently (July/92) is on only occasionally.

4795 *La Voz de los Caras* (5 kw), Apto. 608, Bahía de Caráquez, Prov. de Manabí; Director: Marcelo Nevárez F. (See separate article.)

4800 *Radio Popular Independiente* (5 kw), Avenida Loja 2-408, La Gloria, Cuenca, Prov. de Azuay; Director: Manena E. de Villavicencio. This station has been on the air for 32 years, using both 1220 MW and 4800 SW straight through the day. *Radio Popular Independiente's* studio is located on the second floor of the house of the



station's owner. The folk and pop music played is strictly Ecuadorian.

4840 *Radio Interoceánica* (1 kw), c/o Iglesia del Pacto Evangélico del Ecuador, Casilla 17-01-11294, Quito. (or, *Radio Interoceánica*, Santa Rosa, Cantón el Chaco, Prov. de Napo.) Director: Byron Medina. Located where the Andes meet the jungle, *Radio Interoceánica* is owned by the Swedish Covenant church. They began broadcasting on 1450 MW on May 24, 1984. However, in 1987, missionary engineer Olaf Hegmuir rebuilt the old RCA 1 kw

transmitter for shortwave. He also constructed two "Lazy-H" dipole antennas, a type of antenna which sends the signal straight up, allowing it to cover the region like an umbrella. This antenna pattern, together with their low power, makes *Radio Interoceánica* a very tough DX catch. Programs consist of Bible teaching, sports, health concerns, science, agriculture and news, including rebroadcasts of HCJB news. On Sundays, a full worship service is broadcast in Quichua. Quichua is broadcast daily from 1115 to 1200 UTC, with Spanish the rest of the day. They also use 96.3 MHz FM. The station was destroyed in a strong earthquake in 1987, but completely rebuilt.

4851 *Radio Luz y Vida* (2 kw), Casilla 222, Loja, Prov. de Loja; Director: Eloy Torres P. *Radio Luz y Vida* (Light and Life) has been around for many years now. The station is operated by the *Comunidad de Misioneras Sociales de la Iglesia*, a community of nuns. Programming includes news, music, sports and culture. They are often heard on weekends around 0100 UTC but can be gone from SW for weeks at a time.

4890 *Centinela del Sur* (5 kw), Casilla 196, Loja, Prov. de Loja; Director: Jose Coronel Illescas. News, commercials and some music. For a while, they were alternating back and forth between 4890 and 4899 kHz. *LV de Saquisilí* is back on 4900. CDS continues to use two frequencies though. Since April/92 they have been using 4899 during local mornings and 4871 at night. This might be to avoid interference from Peru's *Radio Chota* on 4890. (*Radio Chota* is very strong in Quito.) Swedish author and DXer Henrik Klemetz gives two tips on helping DXers improve chances of a QSL from this broadcaster: 1) Include technical descriptions of your equipment in your report and 2) Thank them for your QSL afterwards. Sr. Coronel told Henrik he stopped answering most reports because no one ever wrote back to say they received his reply.



4900 *La Voz de Saquisilí-Radio Libertador* (1 kw), Calle 24 de Mayo No. 675, Saquisilí, Prov. de Cotopaxi; Director: Prof. Arturo Mena Herrera. On the air during the local morning only. (See separate article.)

4920 *Radio Quito* (5 kw), Apartado 57, Quito, Prov. de Pichincha. Director: Gonzalo Ruiz. The "Voice of the Capital" has been on since 1940 and is owned by the Quito daily *El Comercio*. *Radio Quito* is respected as one of the leading news voices in Ecuador. They broadcast on SW and 760 MW from 1045 straight through to 0500 UTC.

Q. S. L.
4850 KHZ
1450 KHZ



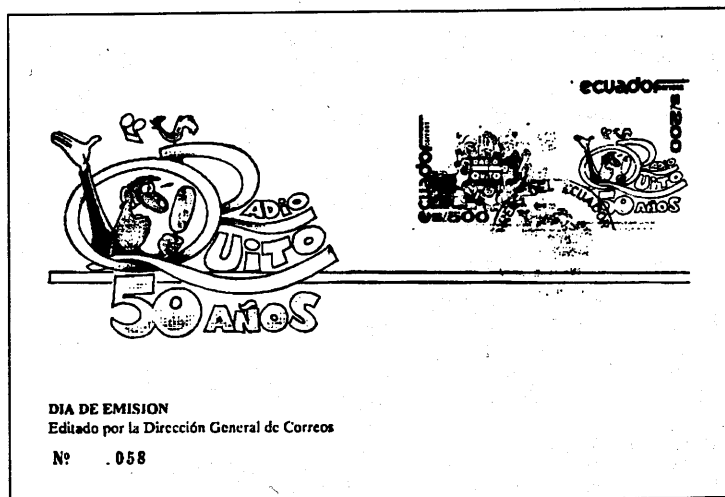
4950 *Radio Baháí* (1 kw), Apartado 14, Otavalo, Prov. de Imbabura. Directora: Señora Nooshin Burwell. The only Andean station in Ecuador north of Quito, *Radio Baháí* is owned and operated by the Baháí assembly in Ecuador. Programming often consists of the distinctive music of the *Otavaleño* Indian people interspersed with Baháí religious messages. There are also programs dedicated to rural development. They have plans to increase the power on SW to 10 kw. SW is on the air from 0850-1100 UTC and 2300-0100 UTC only. The antenna for 4950 is a rhombic supported by eucalyptus poles.

4961 *Radio Federación Shuar* (5 kw), Federación de Centros Shuar, Domingo Comin 1738, Sucua, Prov. de Morona Santiago. (or, Apto. 4122, Quito.) Director: Albino Ututia J. *Radio Federación* broadcasts to the *Shuar*, or *Jivaro* Indians of southeastern Ecuador. This people group is famous for something they did to their enemies as recently as two generations ago: shrinking their heads. The aim of the *Radio Federación* is to educate the Shuar through school programs, providing features on farming and health, and to give the Shuar a sense of their identity by reminding them of their history and heritage. Most of the programming is in the Shuar language but there are also programs in slow Spanish. They also use 5980 kHz with different programming.

5010 *Escuelas Radiofónicas Populares del Ecuador*, Casilla 47 55, Riobamba, Prov. de Chimborazo; Director: Juan Perez Sarmiento. The name of this station, "Radio Schools of the People of Ecuador," tells one what this broadcaster is all about. According to their printed QSL folder, *Escuelas Radiofónicas Populares* "was created to help its listeners gain a sense of identity, to evangelize and to teach listeners how to read and write. The final aims are to help the listener become a self-developed person, to become a useful member of his community and a citizen conscious of his duties and rights." Many of the programs are in the Quichua language and DXers can hear the beautiful music of these people on 5010 kHz. There are also lessons on mathematics, history and agriculture, as well as news and sportscasts and religious programs. Besides broadcasting, the station also provides a hostel where Indians, making a long trip to Riobamba on market days, may spend the night and receive medical help if necessary.

5020 *Emisora "Voz del Upano"* (10 kw), Misión Salesiana, 10 de Agosto s/n, Macas, Prov. de Morona Santiago; Directora: Sor Dolores M. Palacios C. Owned by a large Catholic mission, *Voz del Upano* airs educational programs with different radio classes taking place on several frequencies at the same time. They also air Ecuadorian folk and various types of pop music and you might even hear the occasional commercial. 5020 kHz has become a regular frequency just recently. The other frequencies are 5040, 5965 and 6000 kHz. One usually finds a completely different program on each frequency.

5030 *Radio Católica Nacional* (10 kw), Casilla 540-A, Quito, Prov. de Pichincha; Director: R.P. Antonio Arregui Y. On the air since the 1940's, *Radio Católica* is the official voice of the Catholic church in Ecuador. Many programs are, of course, religious in nature. A good deal of airtime is also devot-



ed to broadcasts of classical and adult-contemporary music. The programs are of high quality, helping the station to maintain a wide listenership.

5040 Emisora Voz del Upano (10 kw), See 5020 kHz.

5050 Emisora Jesus del Gran Poder (5 kw) ,(Radio Jesus of the Great Power) Casilla 133, Quito, Prov. de Pichincha. Director: R.P. Jorge Enríquez Silva. Located in the Quito's oldest convent of San Francisco, this station has operated since 1961 and began SW transmissions in 1966. In 1974, its founder, Padre Francisco Fernandez, passed away and a 5-year court battle over the station's ownership followed between his family and the Franciscan monks. The Franciscans won and they were assigned a new frequency and allowed higher power. *Emisora Jesus del Gran Poder* returned to the air in 1979 on their present shortwave frequency. They are also on MW and have less formal programming with a separate broadcast on FM called *Francisco Estéreo*. All programming is varied, with time devoted to religious broadcasts, music, culture and sports. Their pennant is one of the largest ever to decorate the walls of a DXer's radio room.

5062 Radio Nacional Progreso (2 kw), Casilla Letra "V," Loja, Provincia de Loja; Director: Efraín Herrera Guerrero. This commercial broadcaster has been on the air since 1958 with programs of culture, news, sports and music.

5965 Emisora "Voz del Upano" (10 kw), See 5020 kHz.

5980 Radio Federación Shuar (5 kw), See 4960 kHz.

6000 Emisora "Voz del Upano" (10 kw) See 5020 kHz.

6080 HCJB (Pifo); (See 3220 kHz).

International bands: HCJB broadcasts for Latin America and most areas of the world.

RADIO INTEROCEANICA

IGLESIA DEL PACTO EVANGELICO DEL ECUADOR

CASILLA 11294 - TELEFONO 248-910



FUNDACION FACE

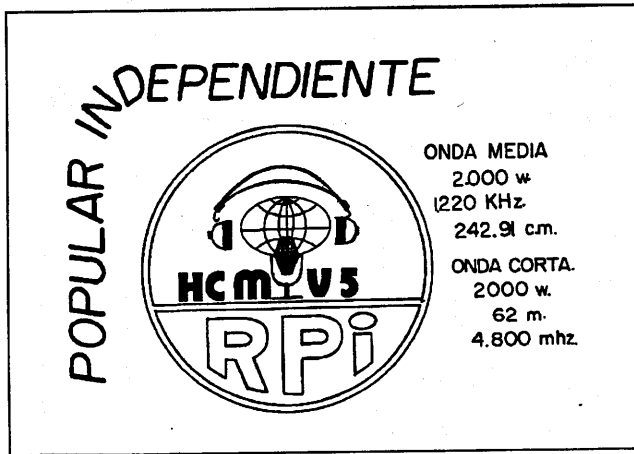
QUITO, ECUADOR - S. A.

Unofficial Stations:

4212 Radio Susudel, Ona, Azuay province. Señor Marco Martinez, a reporter with ERPE in Riobamba, provided the following information to the Japanese DX publication *Relámpago DX*: Sr. Martinez found that *Radio Susudel* made its first transmissions in May 1991. The station was to broadcast educational programs for people living in the country. It operated with a 500-watt transmitter made in Ecuador. In fact, the transmitter was previously used by ERPE. (I'm guessing, but perhaps this was ERPE's old 3985 kHz transmitter-RM) *Radio Susudel* did not have an official government license and they also transmitted on an out-of-band frequency. Apparently there were complaints from other services such as aeronautical stations and in February 1992, *Radio Susudel* was prohibited from making further broadcasts. Sr. Martinez says they will probably return to the air on another frequency with the government's blessing. The director is Herman Donaula. Try this address: *Radio Susudel*, Correo Central, Oña, Provincia de Azuay, Ecuador. (*Relámpago DX* # 38)

Radio Susudel often broadcast the educational program *In-house Teacher* which has lessons on everything from algebra to soup recipes. During local mornings they play music and have commercials.

4271 *Radiodifusora Gonzanamá*, Casilla 379, Loja, Prov. de Loja; Director: Miguel A. Mendieta. This station has been around for nearly ten years, coming on the air irregularly. A good time to try is Friday or Saturday around 0000-0400 UTC. They play lots of pop music and there are many commercials. They are still active as of this writing (July/92).



WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER STATIONS ONE SEES LISTED?

3255 *La Voz del Triunfo* (Sto. Domingo); Señor Edison Yanez says they have no plans to return to SW.

3260 *La Voz del Río Carrizal* (Calceta) Henrik Klemetz notes that in a list published by *Publidatos S.A.* in October 1991 that *LV del Río Carrizal* is not listed on 3260, their former shortwave frequency. This probably indicates that they have no plans to return to shortwave.

3315 *Radio Pastaza* (Puyo); Their SW transmitter is in sad shape. The station, owned and operated by the Professional Drivers' Union of Pastaza Province, has no one who can fix the transmitter and there is no money to hire a qualified engineer. Some members of the union want to sell the station altogether. (Detailed article in March-April 1992 ANDEX bulletin.) Doubtful if they will be back on SW.

3322 *Radiodifusora Sangay* (Macas); no information available.

3370 *Radio Nacional Limon* (Limon Indanza); A puzzle. In December 1991 the station verified a tentative report sent to them by a DXer in Sweden. Later, the DXer discovered that the station he heard was actually in Bolivia. I've never been able to hear any sign of *Radio Nacional Limon* either here in Quito nor in Shell (not too far from Limon Indanza). No other information available.

3380 *Radio Iris* (Quito, formerly in Esmeraldas); No plans to return to SW.

4760 *Sistema de Emisoras Atalaya* (Guayaquil); They had planned to return to SW during June/92.

4810 *La Voz de Galápagos* (Pto. Baquerizo Moreno); At least two DXers have visited this station recently, Maarten van Delft and J.C. Moreno. Both report that the shortwave transmitter, inactive since 1989, looks pretty bad. At the moment, *La Voz de Galápagos* cannot afford to repair it.

4820 Radio Paz y Bien (Ambato); According to their director, Padre Leon, *Radio Paz y Bien* will not be back on 4820 kHz. They have a well-established FM audience and are directing their efforts on expanding the station's network of FM repeaters. They also use 1340 MW.

4870 Radio Río Amazonas (Macuma); This station was completely dismantled in the summer of 1991 after 29 years of broadcasting. The reasons for doing so were both economic and political. Studio equipment was reportedly purchased by *Radio Amazonas* (unrelated station) in Lago Agrio.

4911 Emisoras Gran Colombia (Quito); On the air since August 1944, (SW since 1956) this station is located in a beautifully renovated building in colonial Quito. Programs specialize in news, music, culture and, most importantly, sports. They haven't been on SW for months but are expected to return at any time.

4930 Radiodifusora de la Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana (Quito); Long-time DXers may remember this station being on 60 meters and being a pretty good verifier as well. Henrik Klemetz was in touch with the station and found that they have no plans to return to shortwave.

4940 Radio Nacional del Ecuador (Quito); *Radio Nacional* hasn't been on this frequency for many years, but they do have plans to return. At last word, they were awaiting the importation of a brand new transmitter. *Radio Nacional* has been paying for the rights to this frequency ever since their old transmitter broke down. In the meantime, you can log them via HCJB. They air a program called *Carta Para Los Ecuatorianos Ausentes* (Letter to Absent Ecuadorians) which is broadcast Monday-Friday 1730-1800 UTC, currently on 15350 kHz.

4971 Radio Tarqui (Quito); Manager Gustavo Herdoiza told Henrik Klemetz that they have no plans to reactivate their shortwave frequency.

Aside from the information gathered during visits to many of the stations above, much of the data comes from the sources listed below. I'd like to thank Don Moore for sharing some interesting data gathered during his own station stop-ins here in Ecuador. Rob Rachowiecki's *Ecuador & the Galapagos Islands, a travel survival kit*, is recommended to help you get a current-day feel for the towns and cities you can listen to and, although written three-quarters of a century ago, Harry Franck's *Vagabonding Down the Andes* is invaluable in helping a DXer understand why several attempts are necessary at securing an Andean QSL.

Volumes could be written on the history of Ecuadorian radio. Happily, one book has been written which goes into detail on Ecuadorian radio stations both past and present. The book is *Radiodifusión en la Mitad del Mundo* (Radio in the Middle of the World) and was written by broadcaster Alvaro San Felix. (Much of my information is from that book.) At the moment it is not easily obtainable and is only in Spanish. One of HCJB's Ecuadorian broadcasters has tentative plans to write his own book on Ecuador's radio history. If he does, there will be an English translation.

A comparison between WRTH's from the '60s and the latest edition will show that shortwave is slowly on the wane here in Ecuador. FM with its clear sound and repeaters are taking its place. I hope that these books and articles (maybe even the one you just read) will help you hear and enjoy the stations that remain. Most of all, I hope to meet you down here some day. We're looking for a nice beverage-on-the beach site right now!

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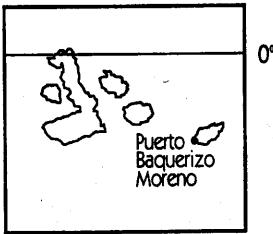
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The author, his wife Lisa and baby daughter Rachel.
(Photo: Prof. Arturo Mena)

CITIES AND TOWNS WITH SHORTWAVE BROADCASTING STATIONS IN ECUADOR



Galápagos Islands
(600 miles due west
of the mainland)

