



to the editors

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A Window to the World

I am a subscriber from Texas. I only listen to shortwave on small portables. Grundig G5, S350DL and Eton E10 are my best – each one better in different areas of my house for some reason. Radio Australia and sometimes Radio New Zealand are my best catches. RA is almost always clear as a bell from 0800 to 1100 hrs. Although I don't understand most of the technical stuff I thoroughly enjoy your magazine.

I made my living doing ranch work in southwest and Big Bend areas of Texas for 40 years and there literally were no radio stations except late at night, like KVOO-Tulsa and WBAP-Ft. Worth. I wish I'd had a shortwave radio back then.

I suffered a head injury in a horsewreck and am disabled now, so having your magazine helps me in my listening.

Robert Shuford

Free to Air

Just received my March issue of *MT*. After reading the *Beginners Corner* by Ken Reitz I just had to write in.

Over a year ago I was a beginner at Free to Air satellite reception. A good friend gave me an old Ku Band dish and FTA receiver. From there it was a learning process. First, you definitely need a 1 meter dish 39" and a linear LNBF. The circular ones that DISH Net and Direct TV use *will not work*. Also a good signal meter to connect to the LNBF helps you to find the satellites you want.

Galaxy 19, 97° West has the most FTA unencrypted channels. However, there are other FTA satellites up there. I use four FTA 1meter dishes, two DiSEqC switches and a 22kHz switch to connect 8 LNBFs to my receiver. That way I do not have to motorize any of my dishes.

Also you can place more than one LNBF on a single dish. I have up to three LNBFs on a single dish, as long as they're no more than 10 degrees apart from the center LNBF.

Www.LyngSat.com has an excellent FTA listing for both C and Ku Band FTA satellites.

I still like listening to the world wide broadcasts on shortwave; however, the shortwave stations are on the radio side of the FTA channels, too! And over 200 worldwide TV channels – *It's great!*

So, thanks to Ken Reitz for writing about the great hobby of FTA.

Craig Campbell

Congratulations on your great FTA dish farm and spirit of satellite experimenting, it's half the fun of the hobby! An even better source for FTA channel info is found at <http://www.global-cm.net/mpeg2central.html>. The

site is run by Mike Kohl of Global Communications in Wisconsin. Mike is a longtime FTA equipment dealer with some excellent C and Ku-band analog and digital equipment at reasonable prices. His list of FTA signals, on both C and Ku-band satellites that cover CONUS as well as Pacific and Atlantic birds visible to US viewers, is the most accurate and up-to-date anywhere. Every couple of months I print out the latest list and go hunting for new channels. I'm always amazed at what I can see and hear!

Ken KS4ZR

Ken, I wanted to bring to your attention that MHz Networks is no longer FTA or on G19. They are only available via DirecTV now. In your article you mention they are on G19.

John, AA3XN

Yes, John, thanks for the heads-up. I noticed that myself; unfortunately it seems the change happened after I had written the column. At a time when Congress is considering slashing what's left of federal funding to public broadcasters, it's hard to blame MHz Networks for cashing in on access to DirecTV viewers and hence their donation dollars.

In my location, MHz is available via a 3rd auxiliary channel on our local PBS station, so it's actually easier for us to tune in (no FTA dish necessary). But, most others across the country won't have that option. MHz Networks does have an extensive list of affiliates (24 over-the-air broadcast stations and 24 cable-TV systems) which may be found here: www.mhznetworks.org/mhzworldview/carriage/.

Ken KS4ZR

Ken, I enjoyed your TVRO/FTA piece in the March issue. Brought back a lot of fun memories. I built my first big-dish system in 1988, and after I moved to MN in 1994 I had a BUD, a 4-foot prime-focus dish for Ku-band, and a Hughes satellite internet dish (plus the usual ham antennas, etc). My house looked like a Russian embassy...

Now condo-bound, I still have two 4DTV receivers, a Uniden TVRO RX or two, two giant 36-inch dish movers (saved for elevation actuators for phased arrays, etc :), a bunch of feed horns and LNBFs, etc, plus a new FTA receiver and a DiSEqC switch that I haven't yet messed with (I'm thinking Ku, though, after reading your article...)

I also have two SCPC (single-channel-per-carrier) audio tuners given to me by Bob Heil, who used to market them on the side from his Heil Sound Ltd business!

I miss watching my favorite TV shows a week early!

Kirk

Additions and Corrections

Thanks very much for including KSM among the stations that are still transmitting SITOR-B [*March issue, Digital Digest and Below 500 kHz columns-ed.*]. We have recently received authorization for an additional FSK frequency, 6328.0kc. The crack MRHS Transmitter Department is hard at work restoring a transmitter for operation on that frequency. It will be a Henry HF-5000D like the others, running about 5000W TPO into a double extended Zepp antenna. Our 6Mc CW frequency does so well both day and night that we thought adding 6Mc to our FSK channels would give more people a chance to copy us. Of course in addition to SITOR-B we also use Baudot on the same frequencies.

Just one correction: the transmitter site is actually located in Bolinas, CA rather than Salinas! The site is just down the road from the NMC (CAMSPAC) transmitter site. We consider the Coast Guard guys to be the new kids on the block. They got there in 1972 while our site was established in 1913 by the American Marconi Company!

Richard Dillman, Chief Operator, Coast Station KSM

Maritime Radio Historical Society

I just wanted to offer a small correction to the story on Air Show Photography Tips by Kevin Burke in the March issue. When talking about memory cards, he states that any camera must complete the write to the memory card before the next picture can commence. Actually, digital SLR cameras like the Canon that Kevin bought have a "burst" feature: the number of photos that can be instantly stored internal to the camera before ANYTHING is written to the data card.

I have an older Canon SLR, and it can take 9 photos at its very fast continuous shooting burst rate before you experience the writing delay. This specification is important to those shooting action such as air shows, and is often talked about in ratings for cameras in photo magazines. This softens a bit the criticality of have to spend more money to obtain the fastest memory card.

Judy May, WIORO

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Happy monitoring!
Rachel Baughn, Editor*