

# LETTERS

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## Shortwave Coverage in MT

MT's Frequency Manager Gayle Van Horn, wrote the following letter to Joe Wood, who was distressed at the cancellation of the *Global Forum* column and the *Broadcast Logs*.

"Joe, after our last MT Readers Survey, it was obvious that readers' favorites had shifted once again, and as always, MT listens to their readers.

"In doing so, we decided to drop the *Broadcast Logs* column and devote additional room for the English SW Guide, as well as including a sampling of pages from the *MT Extra*, which covers all non-English broadcast schedules. The complete version is available by electronic subscription. I am the Frequency Manager for both guides, and the expanded coverage has been a tremendous success, and increased our readership.

"In place of the *Broadcast Logs* column, I now post those logs as Blog Logs, to my Shortwave Central blog <http://mt-shortwave.blogspot.com/>. My blog includes pirate news and QSLs, logs and the latest in shortwave news. It is, by the way, fully searchable, and it is updated daily.

"My *QSL Report* column has remained monthly, plus I post additional QSL news and updates I have had to cut for space constraints in the magazine, to the blog...

"Thank you for your letter, Joe. I have always appreciated your correspondence and contributions over the years..."

Gayle Van Horn, W4GVH

Contrary to rumors, *Monitoring Times* has NOT decreased its shortwave coverage. We did cancel a column which simply repeated information already provided free in nearly every club bulletin, on the air, and over the internet. However, in its place, we are now printing selected foreign-language schedules which are now harder to get with the loss of *Passport to World Band Radio*. And unique to *Monitoring Times* is our massive, nearly comprehensive, monthly-updated compilation of all shortwave broadcasts, which is available for download along with *MT Express* for only \$19.95 (or \$11.95 if you want to retain a print subscription as well).

Reader Craig Poff is glad he made the switch: "I was more interested in the *MTEExtra*... If I am working the dials and come across an unidentified station, especially in another language..., I used *Passport's Blue Pages* to quickly track it down (or at least narrow the possible choices). *MTEExtra* will do this, too [in PDF]. If I run across a signal at 6150, for instance, I can just 'search' 6150 in Adobe which highlights all occurrences, then it's an easy to cross reference it to the time of day. It can replace the Blue Pages of *Passport*, with the benefit that it's updated monthly..."

While it is true the number of feature articles devoted to SW broadcasting has dwindled

during this sunspot minimum, our new features editor, Ken Reitz, is endeavoring to turn this trend around.

MT caters to hobbyists who find radio signals fascinating, including broadcasting (international, domestic, pirate, and clandestine), communications (business, amateur radio, aeronautical, maritime, government and military), and more. We fully intend to continue covering all these topics.

It's a tall order, and we regret it whenever we fail to meet the needs of specific hobbyists, or when we cannot cover every topic every month.

Rachel Baughn

## The End of Pirate Coverage?

Mary Villano, KI6OMJ, explained her fascination with the discontinued *Outer Limits* column:

"... my bent is toward the weird, the illegal and the clandestine. ... I have heard only two pirate broadcasts myself, but found it thrilling when I heard them! One of them was that Kentucky white supremacist (Anderson?) who hid out in the woods and was finally captured.

"I'm a new ham... I'm not an electronics whiz. I don't monitor aircraft, I don't restore old radios, I find longwave beacons incredibly boring, and I'm not into the minutiae of digital modes. But I love *Monitoring Times*, and I've been a subscriber for years. I like the equipment reviews. Mostly, I like the fact that MT covers the entire spectrum of DC to daylight.

"I've never looked for the pirate info on the net - I'm sure there's plenty out there, but I don't have time to search it out. I still think you should include it in your magazine."

Hey, MT has always had a soft spot for the weird and quirky. Mary admitted that frequency and time details would be helpful, and recognized that a lot more could be done with the topic: "I would have liked to have read interviews of pirate broadcasters and some info on the history of pirate broadcasting. How about an interview with someone on the other side - an FCC officer charged with tracking down this stuff? Or even more fascinating, how about a nuts 'n bolts discussion of the equipment used in such an operation? How much power is required? What kinds of antennas? (With the disclaimer, of course, that this is an illegal activity and such discussion should not be construed as an endorsement...). A skilled writer could pack a lot of content into one or two paragraphs."

So, if you have news on pirate radio or a weird radio event, send it in and you may see it appear in *Communications*. If you get a pirate or clandestine QSL, send it in and you'll see it in the *QSL Report*. If you dig up a really meaty story, let us know if you're willing to write it up as a feature. There's still room for pirate radio in MT.

## EDITOR'S SOAPBOX

### Seeing is Believing

Recently the rumor mill has been working overtime regarding the direction in which *Monitoring Times* is headed - like the rumor that we have dropped coverage of shortwave broadcasting and pirate radio, that we are becoming a ham radio magazine, and that we are being inundated with complaints and subscription cancellations. None of these is true.

It is the goal in MT that each column provides information that isn't already widely available, is of interest to at least a third of our readers, is of practical value to hobbyists, and is well written and easy to understand. It doesn't make sense to continue columns with outdated news, stale formats, lackluster writing style, or little immediately applicable information. We continue to tweak the magazine and conduct periodic surveys in order to best serve our readers.

The last survey garnered excellent response from our readers, and encouraged us to try a few new approaches, but we have no intention of discontinuing coverage of *any* field of radio listening.

We welcome your letters and your feedback, and especially your interaction with our columnists to help them maintain our high standard of service to the radio community.

Rachel Baughn  
MT Managing Editor

By the way, if you're just getting interested in pirate and clandestine radio, let me refer you to two excellent guides written by Gayle Van Horn in the 2007 October (*The Bizarre World of Pirate Radio*) and November (*Clandestine Radio*) issues. Call 1-800-438-8155 or email [order@grove-ent.com](mailto:order@grove-ent.com) on options for acquiring these back issues.

### Tick Tock

"Ken, I really enjoyed your 'Shortwave Listening and Art' article (as well as many others!) in the January *Getting Started* column in *Monitoring Times*. I wonder if you've ever heard the minute-long 'Commercial Version of WWV' produced by Douglas Jaffe of LowNoise Productions? If not, you can check it out at [www.mindspring.com/~lownoise/audio/www.mp3](http://www.mindspring.com/~lownoise/audio/www.mp3)

"Quasi-artistic, and not *really* based on WWV sample, but rather hilarious to those of us who've spent decades listening to that familiar station (I've found that I can keep track of seconds *very* accurately due to the mental WWV soundtrack that I can recall at will!)"

Allen Lutins KC2KLC

*This column is open to your considered comments. Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of Monitoring Times. Your letters may be edited or shortened for clarity and length. Please mail to Letters to the Editor, 7540 Hwy 64 West, Brasstown, NC 28902 or email [editor@monitoringtimes.com](mailto:editor@monitoringtimes.com)*

*Happy monitoring!  
Rachel Baughn, Editor*