



AM Switch

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Status changes in AM stations, supplied by the FCC, CRTC, and listeners

CALL LETTER CHANGES

	<u>Old Call</u>		<u>New Call</u>
1490	WTAA	NJ Pleasantville	WBSS

CPs ON THE AIR

1560	KKAA	SD	Sioux Falls - Now on with U4 10000/10000 doubling their nighttime power. No change in the night pattern, except size, as it shoots up over the Minnesota/North/South Dakota borders into Manitoba.
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ACTIONS

560	WNSR	TN	Brentwood - Licensed for U5 4500/75 from two antenna sites, WNSR filed for a Special Temporary Authorization (STA) to operate U1 1125/75 from their current night site (a long wire) as they have lost the lease at their daytime site.
900	KJSK	NE	Columbus - Coordinate correction to 41-26-23/97-23-25.
1460	KBSF	LA	Springhill - Reinstated application for U1 5000/160 moving to Nash, Texas (near Texarkana), a move of about 60 miles.
1510	KPIG	CA	Piedmont - Licensed for U4 8000/230, KPIG has a CP for U4 8000/2400. They have filed for an STA to operate U5 8000/58 while complete construction of the new nighttime facility which was scheduled to start on January 19, 2010.

APPLICATIONS

1490	WTJV	FL	Deland - Currently silent due to their tower being destroyed, WTJV has applied to erect an 85' Valcom antenna system at the site of the original tower, and resume operation as U1 1000/1000.
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AM on FM

960	WTCH	WI	Shawano - W243CM (96.5) Shawano
1260	WKLB	KY	Manchester - W283AH (104.5) Manchester

CANCELLATIONS

1450	-----	NV	Battle Mountain - Application for a new station
1520	-----	WI	Howard - Application for a new station

HEAR AND THAR

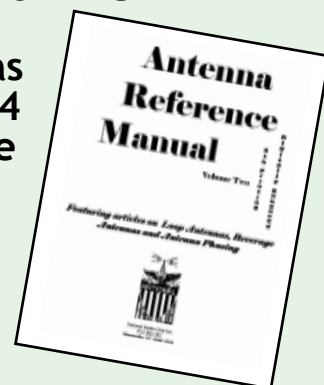
🕒 **Returning to the airwaves:** WDMV-700 Walkersville, Maryland (we surmise only temporarily so as to beat the FCC's "silent-for-a-year-and lose-your-license" rule, as they filed for a Silent STA on February 13, 2009).

◆ **Reported as Silent:** WGCK-1480 Neon, Kentucky; WPNT South bend, Indiana [still off per the station].

◆ Thanks to Ken Chatterton, Gerry Conkling, Wheeler Conover & Blaine Thompson.

Antenna Reference Manual, Volume 2

8th Printing Digitally Enhanced and Updated This book is a compilation of numerous articles on the subject of antennas for medium wave DX'ers, originally published between 1974 and 1981 in *DX News*. Some articles were formerly available as reprints. Includes articles on air-core and ferrite core loops, antenna tuners for longwire and Beverage antennas, and phasing units for use with Beverage antennas and longwires. 8 1/2" X 11" bound book format. Price: \$8.95 to NRC members; \$11.95 to non-members. Canadian orders: PayPal or postal M. O. only. Order from NRC Publications - P.O. Box 473251, Aurora CO - 80047-3251. (CO residents, please add 3.5% sales tax.)

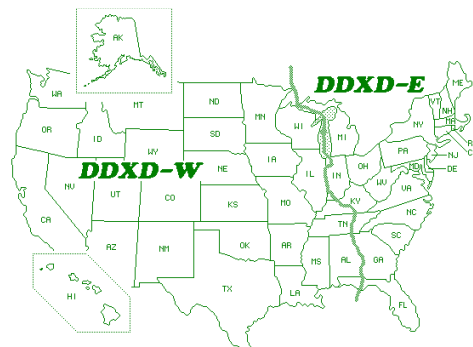


Domestic DX Digest

West: Jim Tedford Radio_Enthusiast@hotmail.com
20310 Bothell-Everett Highway B4 - Bothell, WA 98012-8133

East: Mike Brooker aum108@idirect.com
99 Wychcrest Ave - Toronto, Ontario M6G 3X8 CANADA

(Division line
is between East
and Central time
zones)



DX Catches in the U. S. and Canada, with 24-hr. ELT

DDXD-West

Greetings from the evergreen Pacific Northwest. Twenty four hours ago I was in the depths of despair, contemplating calling this week's column on account of no contributions. Nothing. Zero. Zip. Nada. Not even from myself. Then like a Phoenix rising from the ashes, a stalwart trio of AM DXers girded their loins and answered the call of duty.

Stalwart DXers

- JDS-MN** Jeff Steffes, Watertown, MN Kenwood R-2000, Quantum QX Loop.
JDT-WA Jim Tedford, Bothell, WA Unstalwart-like with a RCA Superadio III, Crane Twin Coil Ferrite.
SP-WI Sheryl Paszkiewicz, Manitowoc WI Grundig Sat 800 & internal antennae.
WH-CO Wayne Heinen, Aurora, CO. Kiwa Loop Drake R8B, E/W Flag, N/S. Flag, Dual TG-1 Termination Gizmo w/DX Engineering RPA-1 preamp and Mini DXP5.


Station News

- 1320 KXYZ TX Houston** 01/06 0400 A surprise here! Out of SS music to SS accented announcer "KXYZ Houston, a multicultural radio broadcast station" in English and continuing in SS. This is evidently ETH now and no longer exclusively Vietnamese (**WH-CO**) (I've heard them only in SS recently, and that ID is hard to come by! -pls.)

KXYZ1320

DX Logs (All Times ELT)

- 540 KVIP CA Redding** 1/15 2138 Promo "Very Inspiring Programs" Key Life on how to bring people back to Christ. Noisy signals with lots of fading. Eventually frequency dominated by CBK. (**JDT-WA**)
- 650 CKOM SK Saskatoon** 12/31 2106 out of area weather "CKOM is Saskatoon's Number one News and Information Station..." (**WH-CO**)
- 650 WSM TN Nashville** 12/31 2200 mentions of WSM and their New Year's Eve show. Mixed with CKOM. (**WH-CO**)
- 660 KTNN AZ Window Rock** 01/01 1753 out of "Old Rocky Top" C&W KTNN ID to CNN in KKLT 670 IBOC. (**WH-CO**)
- 670 WSCR IL Chicago** 01/02 2259 out of strip club spot to program note "Sports and Guy Talk on SportsRadio 670 The Score Chicago's Sports Station" Local KLTT phased. (**WH-CO**)
- 880 WCBS NY New York** 01/13 0649 "You're traffic report is never more than ten minutes away on WCBS." (**JDS-MN**)
- 1000 WMVP IL Chicago** 12/29 2300 "ESPN 1000" and mentions of Chicago to ESPN Sports. (**WH-CO**)
- 1000 KKIM NM Albuquerque** 12/30 0900 out of REL "KKIM Albuquerque" short weather and plea for donations. (**WH-CO**)
- 1090 KEXS MO Excelsior Springs** 01/06 1814 out of EWTN programming "... talk AM 1090 KEXS Excelsior Springs" New for me and taped with local KMXA off air. Many thanks to John Wilkins for the phone call alerting me to KMXA's silence. Loggings on 1100 were a result of this also. Taped a full data sign-off at 1814 and Wham KMXA back on and the Party was over at 1816! (**WH-CO**)
- 1100 WZFG MN Dilworth** 01/06 1723 out of Sean Hannity "AM 1100 The Flag" good with local KMXA-1090 off. (**WH-CO**)
- 1100 KNZZ CO Grand Junction** 01/06 1727 out of local spots "NewsRadio 1100 KNZZ weather" mixing with WZFG with KMXA-1090 off. (**WH-CO**)
- 1170 KOWZ MN Waseca** 01/13 0858 "Serving southwest Minnesota, news talk 1170 KOWZ."

- (JDS-MN)
- 1200 WOAI TX **San Antonio** 01/11 0825 Talk about Dallas Cowboys, followed by "WOAI news time, seven twenty-five." (JDS-MN)
- 1210 CFYM SK **Kindersley** 01/11 0835 Weather forecast with regional temps, into local commercials followed by Station ID: "Classic Hits 1210 CFYM" then song *Green Eyed Lady* by Sugarloaf. (JDS-MN)
- 1210 KOKK SD **Huron** 01/14 0751 Farm report, followed by commercial for Ted Clark Insurance of Lexington, into small talk about local weather, followed by Station ID: KOKK. (JDS-MN)
- 1230 WCLO WI **Janesville** 1-14 2152 lcl BB, "WCLO.com" lcl spots, not common (SP-WI)
- 1240 KSLV CO **Monte Vista** 01/05 0000 out of C&W music "KSLV Monte Vista" to ABC News. (WH-CO)
- 1290 CFRW MB **Winnipeg** 1-14 2200 rock, calls, not common (SP-WI)
- 1300 WNQM TN **Nashville** 1-11 2300 surprised to hear Spanish way over WOOD & WRDZ. R Vida IDs, Christian mx. (SP-WI) Don't know about you, but Spanish way over wood always startles the heck out of me. (JDT-WA)
- 1320 KVMC TX **Colorado City** 01/05 1900 out of C&W "You've been listing to KVMC AM 1320..." Sign off announcement. Mixing with SS stations on the channel new for me and taped 15th new station this season. (WH-CO)
- 1320 KNIA IA **Knoxville** 01/06 0200 out of C&W music "The number one source for news and information in Marion County..." KNIA Jingle "KNIA AM 1320 Knoxville" to more C&W music. This was another new one for me 16th of the season and taped for the collection. (WH-CO)
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- 1370 WCCN WI **Neillsville** 01/14 0825 "Your Home For Timeless Favorites" followed by Song *Feelin' Groovy* by Simon and Garfunkel, followed by "1370 Neillsville." (JDS-MN)
- 1450 KBFS SD **Belle Fourche** 01/03 1859 out of program note "Right here on AM 1450 KBFS Belle Fourche." (WH-CO)
- 1560 KNZR CA **Bakersfield** 01/07 1900 out of local talk show "... on 1560 KNZR Bakersfield..." to Ap Radio News. (WH-CO)
- 1640 KFXV OK **Enid** 01/15 0625 "The Sports Authority For Oklahoma, 1640 The Score." (JDS-MN) That is so true, Enid being the Authority Capital of Oklahoma and all. (JDT-WA)
- 1660 WQLR MI **Kalamazoo** 01/15 1902 Commercial: Person's Auto Repair, Kalamazoo. (JDS-MN)
- 1680 WPRR MI **Ada** 01/15 0659 TOH "WPRR 1680 AM Public Reality Radio," followed by news. (JDS-MN)
- 1700 KBGG IA **Des Moines** 01/15 0650 Program: Mike and Mike in the morning, Into commercial for Lumber Liquidators, followed by Station ID: "1700 The Champ." (JDS-MN)

Next time you are kicking around the house trying to think of something to do (after you have submitted your DDXD-West loggings, of course) go to YouTube and put "AM DXing" into the search box. Should keep you busy for a few hours. See you next time. (JDT-WA)

DDXD-East

REPORTERS

- BC-QC **Bogdan Chiochiu, Pierrefonds** - Sony SRF-A1 walkman, Sangean ACS-818 CST, Grundig G5, PK loop
- SC-IN **Steve Chappell, McCordsville** - Chrysler car radio, K9AY loop antenna
- HF-MI **Harold Frodge, Midland** - Drake R8B, 125 ft. bow-tie; 85 ft. RW & 180 ft. center-fed RW
- KK-VA **Kraig Krist, Manassas** - NRD-545, homemade 134 foot multiband antenna running NW to SE
- IEN-GA **Ira Elbert New, III, Watkinsville** - Sangean ATS 909 & Select-A-Tenna
- JJR-MI **John J. Rieger, L'Anse** - Sony ICF SW7600GR
- MKB-ON **Mike Brooker, Toronto** - Grundig G5, Grundig YB-400PE, Sony SRF-39FP, Panasonic RF-2200 (receiver emeritus)

UNID/BOOTLEG

- 1710 UNID - 1/14 1800 - presumably one of the greater Boston-area Haitian pirate sta-



tions with continuous talk by man in FF, no music. Almost no copy due to strong hiss QRM. Hiss does not appear to be IBOC slop from 1700 as better in LSB; source seems to be a few kHz higher. **(HF-MI)**

LOGGINGS

600	WVAR	WV	Richwood - 1/6 0717 - Choppy, "1490 WSGB and 96.5 FM" dual ID, playing oldies. WSGB//WVAR. NEW! (SC-IN)
	WSNL	MI	Flint - 1/6 0712 - Weak, local weather "from the WSNL Weather Center..." NEW! (SC-IN)
620	WSNR	NJ	Jersey City - 12/27 0100 - Poor to fair then very good with a highly processed ID that punches thru the noise, "This is AM 620 WSNR Jersey City." (SC-IN)
630	CFCO	ON	Chatham - 1/15 1706 - playing a contemporary country song with electric guitar on one ear and drums on the other one. Switch between both due to "platform motion"... Carried hockey later, after 1930. (BC-QC)
750	CKJH	SK	Melfort - 1/9 0805 - Poor with "CK-750" news, ads, jingle after local weather, oldies. No WSB. (JJR-MI)
840	WKTR	VA	Earlysville - 1/9 0400 - Sports news and information. Good signal with slight fades in the null of WHAS in Louisville, KY. "AM 840, WKTR, Charlottesville" and "ESPN Radio and ESPN Radio.com". (IEN-GA)
860	KWPC	IA	Muscatine - 1/10 0752 - Poor in CJBC null with call letter IDs, oldies. (JJR-MI)
1060	KFIL	MN	Preston - 1/11 0853 - Poor with "True County KFIL" sweeper into ads and C&W. (JJR-MI)
1190	KQQZ	MO	Desoto - 1/11 1938 - Fair, slogan "Killer Country KQQZ" and playing classic country. NEW! (SC-IN)
1220	KDDR	ND	Oakes - 1/11 0800 - Poor with ToH ID for KDDR/KOVC/KDAK in fade up over others. (JJR-MI)
1230	WTKG	MI	Grand Rapids - 1/9 1731 - Poor with local weather and call letter IDs over/under mess. (JJR-MI)
	WSOO	MI	Sault Ste. Marie - 1/9 0745 - Poor with "12-30 WSOO" jingles between 2 songs over others. (JJR-MI)
	KTRF	MN	Thief River Falls - 1/9 0819 - poor with local weather, "Sears in Thief River Falls" noted in mess. (JJR-MI)
1260	KDUZ	MN	Hutchinson - 1/10 0804 - Poor in null of others with Sunday morning call-in show talking about how to clean colon. (JJR-MI)
1270	WLBR	PA	Lebanon - 1/10 0759 - local weather, ToH ID "good morning...it's 8 o'clock on 1270 AM WLBR Lebanon" then lost to WXYT's Sporting News Radio. (MKB-ON)
1300	WJMO	OH	Cleveland - 1/9 1732 - Poor with slogan "1300 WJMO, Cleveland's Inspiration Station" over usual WOOD. Rare. (JJR-MI)
1310	WORC	MA	Worcester - 1/15 1536 - using "La Mega" and "Power Trece Diez" slogans and playing tropical music. At 1630 EST, after a Zacaríá Ferreira track, male announcer told listeners he will be live in Massachusetts, on stage! Very good, over/under CIWW and others on the Sony SRF-A1 barefoot! Are they using stereo? I couldn't really tell! (BC-QC)
1340	KVBR	MN	Brainerd - 1/8 2000 - Poor with Brainerd v. Cloquet Lumberjacks (minor league hockey?), "AM1340 KVBR" ID out of ads over mess then out. (JJR-MI)
1380	KCIM	IA	Carroll - 1/10 0823 - very poor in under others. Call letter ID after ads, NOS songs. (JJR-MI)
1440	WZYX	TN	Cowan - 1/7 1815 - Fair, "This is Jeff...WZYX Radio" ID noted. NEW! (SC-IN)
	WHKZ	OH	Warren - 1/14 2355 - religious programming in mix with other talk station, station promo "...don't miss... every night at seven thirty here on fourteen forty WHKZ...Word of the Day", slogan "Northern Ohio's Christian talk station AM twelve twenty 'The Word'" (1220 'The Word' = WHKW). Into call in show "Talk of the Night Radio". (KK-VA)
1470	WBTX	VA	Broadway-Timberville - 1/14 1715* - over WNYY with sign-off announcement including invitation to tune to WLTK-103.3, "...thank you for listening to WBTX and may the Lord continue to bless you", off with no SSB. (MKB-

- ON)
- 1480 WCNS PA Latrobe - 1/13 2355 – in mix with Buddy Holly “Everyday” song, station promo “We’re playing America’s best music... WCNS Latrobe” into news. (KK-VA)
- 1510 KMSD SD Milbank – 1/11 0817 - Poor in WRRD null with woman reading news, three ads and finally call letter ID after 11 minutes of waiting. (JJR-MI)
- WLAC TN Nashville - 1/10 2355 - “Coast to Coast AM” in mix with other talk station, “Fifteen ten WLAC” ID into sports results, ToH ID “News radio fifteen ten WLAC and WNRQ... your home for Fox news...it’s 11 o’clock” into news. (KK-VA)
- 1530 WCKY OH Cincinnati - 1/8 2355 - Butler v. Wright State basketball game, “The sports animal joins Fox sports already in progress”, slogan “Fox Sports radio fifteen thirty ‘Homer’ the sports animal...fifteen thirty ‘Homer’ and fifteen thirty homer dot com”. (KK-VA)

International DX Digest

Bruce Conti nrcidxd@aol.com
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Nashua, NH 03062-1174

Foreign DX Catches. All times are UTC

Transatlantic DX

- 162 FRANCE *France-Inter*, Allouis (47°10'N 02°12'E) JAN 9 2141-2150 - Two women with interview in French, many mentions of Africa; rap music. Fair; only hets on other LWBC frequencies at this time, including rarely heard 180 kHz. [Frodge-MI]
- 189 ICELAND *Ríkisútvarpid*, Gufuskálar (64°54'N 23°55'W) JAN 8 2312 - Man took phone call then into pop tune; poor and dove into the muck by 2315. [Frodge-MI]
- 963 FINLAND *Radio 86*, Pori (61°28'N 21°35'E) JAN 10 0300 - Good; fanfare and “...mezhdunarodnoye Radio Kitaya” ID. [Conti-NH]
- 1062 ITALY *Rai Radiouno* synchros JAN 9 2258 - Fair; woman in Italian, abbreviated anthem, then pre sign-off test tones and off. [Conti-NH]
- 1143 KALININGRAD *R.Mayak*, Bolshakovo (54°54'N 21°42'E) JAN 9 2259 - Interval signal through Spain and an unID het. [Conti-NH]
- 1179 SWEDEN *R.Sweden International*, Sölvesborg (55°59'N 14°40'E) JAN 9 2225 - Excellent; Swedish program, 2230 interval signal, “You’re listening to Radio Sweden, broadcasting to Europe on medium wave 1179 kilohertz. Stay tuned for half hour programs in English.” [Conti-NH]
- 1215 KALININGRAD *VOR* Bolshakovo JAN 9 2259 - Good, over *Absolute Radio*; ID in English and interval signal. [Conti-NH]
- 1431 UKRAINE *Radio 3/R.Kultura*, Kopani JAN 9 2158 - Fair; choral music, off at 2200. [Conti-NH]
- 1457.82 ALBANIA Fllakë (41°22'N 19°31'E) JAN 9 2050 - Loud het against 1458 kHz. [Conti-NH]
- 1521 SAUDI ARABIA *BSKSA* Duba (27°20'N 35°45'E) JAN 9 2055 - Good; monotonic speaker, time marker on the hour and fanfare into headlines with attention signal between items, parallel 9555 and 9870 kHz. [Conti-NH]

Pan-American DX

- 1180 CUBA *R.Rebelde*, Villa María and Mayarí Arriba JAN 15 1055 - Good with synchro echo; folk music parallel 600 kHz. [Conti-NH]

Contributors

Bruce Conti, Nashua NH; SDR IQ, variable termination SuperLoop antennas 13 x 20-m east and 15 x 23-m south.

Harold Frodge, Midland MI; Drake R8B, 125-ft bow-tie, 85-ft random wire, 180-ft center-fed random wire.

RADIO LUMIERE



International News

HAITI: Radio online as of JAN 15: "Our Radio Lumière web site is back on line. Last night after the earthquake we had so many visitors it overwhelmed our servers! Sorry for the inconvenience. Unfortunately we do not have the live feed from Haiti so you can listen to your radio station. The good news is that the studios in Cote Plage are still standing and nearly all the personnel are accounted for. The bad news is that the installations on Boutillier are down. So Radio Lumière is still not back on the air. We will try to keep you posted as things progress." [www.radiolumiere.org] *R.Kiskeya* streaming audio via Live365 is down, but the



web site contained earthquake photos and news of one radio station on the air. "SignalFM et CaraïbesFM émettent en duplex: Sur les ondes de SignalFM, le cinéaste Arnold Antonin s'est fait l'écho de la société civile haïtienne pour exiger du gouvernement haïtien en général et du président Préval en particulier de venir s'exprimer à la nation sur la seule station encore en diffusion SignalFM. Il a fait état de nombreux cadavres qui jonchent les rues et qui à court terme vont poser un sérieux problème de santé publique." [www.radiokiskeya.com] *CaraïbesFM* streaming audio is on

the air with news/talk. [www.caraibesfm.com] *SignalFM* streaming audio is on the air with music, and the web site features a slide show of earthquake images. [www.signalfmhaiti.com] *Radio 4VEH* web site www.radio4veh.org was down. Checked 4VEH website JAN 15 at 1221 UTC - It now seems to be online. [Tony Magon VK2IC via mwdx]

UNITED STATES: VOA Creole Service expands hours, adds AM frequency to reach quake victims. Washington, D.C., January 14, 2010 - The Voice of America's (VOA) Creole Service, reaching out to Haitian earthquake victims in their language, is ramping up the strength and frequency of emergency broadcasts to Haiti. With Haiti's communications infrastructure badly damaged, the VOA, the largest international broadcaster in Haiti, is providing listeners with news and information via a combination of shortwave, AM and satellite broadcasts. "We're doing everything we possibly can to reach people in Haiti who have a desperate need for information," said Alberto Mascaro, chief of VOA's Latin America Division. He said Creole Service programming on shortwave and satellite radio has expanded from 1.5 hours daily to 5 hours. Programs now air at 7:30-8:30 am EST (1230-0130 UTC); 12:30-2:30 pm EST (1730-1930 UTC); 5:00-6:00 pm EST (2200-2300 UTC) and 8:00-9:00 pm EST (0100-0200 UTC). The evening programs can also be heard on **1180 AM** from a transmitter and tower in Marathon, Florida, pre-empting *Radio Martí* at those times. VOA is playing a leading role to help Haitians reach out to one another. A special call-in number - 1-202-205-9942, mailbox 42 - has been established for people to leave messages that will be broadcast to Haiti. Facebook and Twitter accounts have also been created in Creole. VOA reporters are on the ground in Haiti, covering the international response to the disaster. Basic survival information, statements by President Obama and messages from Haitians living in the United States have been broadcast back to those dealing with the disaster. Like other native Haitians living in the United States, VOA Creole staffers are still trying to confirm the status of their relatives on the island, according to Ronald Cesar, chief of the Creole Service. VOA's Creole Service reaches more than 50 percent of adult Haitians on a weekly basis. Up-to-date information is also available around the clock on www.VOANews.com/creole. [VOA press release via mwdx]

73 and Good DX!

Expiring? Time to renew? Not sure when? Need to call or e-mail someone or join e-DXN or DXAS? Check the back page - it's all there!

The County Cross Reference

What a time-saver! A complete list of counties, parishes, and similar political divisions in the U. S. and Canada. Two lists are included: alpha by county, and by state. Compiled by Bill Hale and designed and produced by Wayne and Joan Heinen. \$8.95 for members, \$11.95, non-member; overseas surface mail, add \$4.00 for first copy; \$.64 for each add'l copy/ For airmail, add \$8.00 for each 3 or fraction of 3. Order "CCR" from NRC Publications - P.O. Box 473251, Aurora CO - 80047-3251. (CO residents, please add 3.5% sales tax.)

Broadcast Test Report

A periodic update of station testing activities

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DX Tests Committee – Inaugural 2010 Report

Welcome to what we hope will be a semi-regular feature.

We have undertaken to revive the DX tests Committee, a joint venture of IRCA and NRC, with a view to encouraging stations to run special tests or to let us know in advance when they will be working on their facilities.

It seems, lately, that DX tests have gone the way of the QSL. Tests used to be a relatively common, yet fewer and fewer stations are participating. We used to enjoy several one or two tests a month, at their peak. Now we're lucky to get one or two a year.

We'd like to see more activity. Tests are an opportunity to log new stations – daytimers running at night, or a 24-hour station running daytime power and pattern during the witching hour.

More tests will also complement other efforts to revive and maintain interest in DX at a time when conventional radio's days seem numbered. Witness all the effort to promote ultralight radios, \$50 marvels that, even without modifications, have tremendous nulling capabilities and can pick up stations thousands of miles away.

Tests generally run between 0000 and 0600 local time, when broadcast regulators allow testing and other related activity to take place. We don't recommend abusing this privilege – for example, running on day power and pattern on multiple, consecutive nights. Once a year, or whenever a station needs to tweak its technical facilities, is more than sufficient.

Content can vary, but tests intended for DX reception generally include morse code IDs, sound effects such as sweep tones, and an eclectic mix of music – say high-school marching bands or the wild sounds of the klezmer. In other words, material that helps the station stand out from others on the same frequency. Morse code and sweep tones are particularly effective at cutting through a crowded channel. Even graveyarders – local stations on frequencies such as 1230 and 1400 – have been heard at great distances.

Stations should run DX tests using their daytime transmitter pattern and power. Otherwise, they're really doing nothing much out of the ordinary.

DX tests don't magically appear. They happen through the concerted effort of volunteers like you who contact the stations and ask. If you know an engineer, program director or owner at a particular station, why not ask! Perhaps you are the engineer, PD or owner. If you receive a particularly friendly QSL, send a thank-you and a friendly, polite pitch for a test.

The worst that can happen is you'll be turned down. Really, that's no big deal – just move on and ask another station. Somebody, somewhere will eventually say *Yes!* if you persist in your efforts and make a conscious effort to be friendly and approachable.

When a station agrees to test, let us know so we can notify DXers around the world. Contact us at the address above. If you're not sure how to make your query, or if your station contact isn't familiar with running a DX test, we're here to help. We can provide you with a generic sample letter, which you can adapt to suit your target station. We can even provide sound effects and 'weird' music.

We might add that if you hear in advance of a station planning to go off the air to do transmitter work, please let us know immediately. A station briefly vacating a channel also represents an opportunity to hear stations that would normally be obscured. Furthermore, consider asking the station to run some morse code, sweep tones, or other DX test material for a few minutes when they're doing their work or returning to the air.

Please keep in mind that the more advance notice you can provide, the better able we are to pass the word along through DX club paper bulletins and over the DX Audio Service. Unfortunately, not every DXer has internet access (those of you who do not have computers might consider setting up a Hotmail or Yahoo account and using a computer at your local library – you'll get lots of good DX tips by subscribing to the many alert and discussion lists out there).

Here's a New Year's challenge: If each of you reading this contacts one station – well, can you imagine? That would be a season to remember!

To help, this column will appear periodically in the paper bulletins of both clubs, and also online where appropriate (feel free to circulate).

You are welcome to e-mail any feedback and suggestions to the committee at dxtests@bell.net or to log onto dxtests.info@gmail.com or e-DXN to see what tests have been scheduled.

Supercharging the Tecsun PL-380 DSP Portable

A 7.5" Loopstick Transplant Optimized for Medium Wave

By Gary DeBock



Introduction The Tecsun PL-380 AM-LW-FM-SW receiver represents the best effort of China's premier radio manufacturing company to incorporate all the innovative features of Silicon Labs' 4734 DSP chip. As the refined product of several months of manufacturing improvements, the model offers astonishingly effective 1 kHz DSP-enhanced selectivity (as well as 2, 3, 4 and 6 kHz filtering options for other listening situations), plus freedom from the "soft mute" issue that plagued all previous 4734 DSP chip radios (PL-300WT / G8, D92L, D96L and PL-310). With the razor-sharp AM selectivity offered by the PL-380, serious transoceanic DXing is certainly possible for purchasers of this inexpensive pocket radio (\$45.99 plus \$24 shipping by registered

air mail from Hong Kong), especially when it is coupled to effective external antennas..

The PL-380 Stock Loopstick Although the DSP-enhanced AM selectivity of the PL-380 is impressive indeed, the loopstick of this breakthrough model certainly won't thrill dedicated DXers. Tecsun has chosen to include a relatively small and flat (3 1/8 x 5/16", or 80 x 8mm) ferrite bar, with a strange three-section coil seriously mismatched in inductance for maximum AM sensitivity (from the DSP chip). Even though the stock model is still capable of receiving some interesting AM band DX with reasonable sensitivity, dedicated transoceanic DXers really need optimum weak-signal reception from the loopstick, and this model's mismatched, cost-cutting midget bar was simply unacceptable to the TP-chasing author. A decision was made to transplant an effective 7.5" Amidon Type 61 ferrite bar-based loopstick into the PL-380, with the 40/44 Litz wire coil inductance perfectly matched to the 4734 DSP chip for optimum AM sensitivity. This would complement the PL-380's razor-sharp selectivity with an equally effective weak-signal DXing capability, presumably transforming the model into a compact AM-DXing sensation.

Transplant Materials Required To perform this modification, a hobbyist will need to order one 7.5" Amidon Type 61 ferrite bar (available from <http://www.amidoncorp.com>, part #R61-050-750, \$20.00 plus shipping) and approximately 15 feet of 40/44 Litz wire (available from Dave Schmarder, who prefers to quote a price after an inquiry by email to thefiercerabbit@1n34a.com). In addition to these loopstick materials, a hobbyist will need to choose a mounting system for the new external loopstick, either a plastic frame glued to the upper front cabinet section (used by the author), or a plywood type mounting frame holding both the radio and loopstick (used by John Bryant and others). Both of these mounting systems are described in the E100 Slider Loopstick article, posted at

<http://www.mediafire.com/?nqggfm2jymc>. Standard electronic tools will be used for the procedure.



Loopstick Transplant Theory Detailed experiments on previous Tecsun 4734 DSP chip models (PL-300WT, G8, etc) have shown that the DSP chip provides optimum AM sensitivity when the loopstick coil inductance is properly matched to 4734 chip's internal varactor. Unlike previous radio models, these DSP radios can provide maximum AM sensitivity across the band with a single optimum inductance value from the loopstick coil. This modification not only will provide a great increase in the size and quality of the ferrite bar used in the PL-380 loopstick, but it will also cure a serious inductance

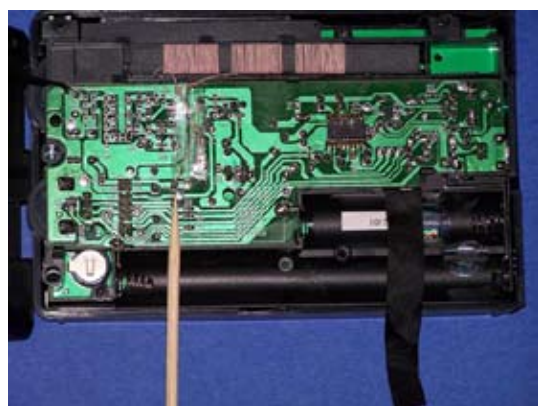
mismatch existing between the stock coil and the 4734 DSP chip. In detailed testing with an 81-turn Slider coil and the 7.5" Amidon ferrite bar (shown in the picture to the left), AM signal strength readings were checked on the PL-380's digital display for different coil positions (and different inductances) as the coil was slid across the ferrite bar. The purpose of this testing was to find the optimal loopstick coil inductance for maximum AM sensitivity in the PL-380. Since the signal strength readings on the PL-380 digital display change from sample to sample, it was necessary to average the readings in each coil position, and search for a point where the average signal readings were clearly much higher than other coil positions across the ferrite bar. After detailed testing, such a coil position was actually found at the 554 uh (microhenry) coil position, where the 81-turn Slider coil was 43 mm (1 11/16") from the end of the ferrite bar. As shown in the photo, this position clearly provided a huge increase in AM signal strength readings relative to the stock PL-380, averaging about 20 dBu across the band. Astonishingly, the stock PL-380 loopstick coil was measured at the 233 uh (microhenry) position—far from the optimum inductance for maximum AM sensitivity in the PL-380. This serious mismatch will be cured in the modification.

Constructing the New Loopstick The new coil of 81 turns of 40/44 Litz wire should be wound on a base of adhesive tape around the Amidon ferrite bar, with the sticky side facing up (to hold the coil turns in place). Place about 3" of this adhesive tape on the ferrite bar, with the beginning edge about 1" from the end of the bar. Leaving about 10" of extra Litz wire to be used for connection leads at each end of the coil, start winding the 81-turn coil of 40/44 Litz wire on the adhesive tape, starting at a position exactly 43 mm (1 11/16") from one end of the ferrite bar, and working toward the center of the bar. When you are finished winding this 81-turn coil, the length of the coil should be approximately 43 mm (1 11/16") long. Secure the coil with thin cut strips of strapping tape (insulating type only) running horizontally across the coil. Although it is not necessary to use an LCR meter to perform this modification, the coil's inductance may be checked at around 554 uh, if desired. Minor variations in coil inductance will not cause any significant degradation in the new loopstick's DXing performance.

Preparing for Installation The PL-380 stock loopstick and the wrist strap should be removed from the radio prior to installation of the new loopstick. Although the wrist strap is easy to remove, the stock loopstick typically will not depart without testing the patience of the hobbyist.

Remove the four screws from the back of the cabinet (as shown in the photo below), one of which is a shorter screw in the battery compartment. Carefully separate the front and back cabinet sections, taking care not to pull on the whip antenna connector wire. Lay the circuit board in a flat position, and note the two loopstick antenna leads soldered to the circuit board (shown in the photo at right). Pull the small strip of strapping tape off of these two antenna leads, and desolder the leads from the circuit board. Using a small flat-bladed jeweler's screwdriver, break the glue bonds on all four sides between the loopstick ferrite bar and the plastic mounting slot, and separate the plastic notch pins from both sides of the ferrite bar. Continue working patiently until the ferrite bar will rotate inside the slot, then attempt to pry the ferrite bar out of the cabinet by sliding the jeweler's screwdriver alternatively under each end of the ferrite bar. Since the loopstick is secured with an excessive glob of glue on the bottom side (where the coils meet the plastic slot), it is unlikely to salvage the loopstick intact in one piece, but for purposes of the transplant modification, the empty plastic slot will provide a convenient routing space for the new 40/44 Litz wires, without the stray inductance that would occur if the stock loopstick were left in the cabinet.

After the stock loopstick is removed from the cabinet, remove the wrist strap also (the new Litz wires will be routed through the wrist strap hole in the back cabinet section). At this time, the newly wound 7.5" loopstick should be secured to the mounting system of the hobbyist's choice (either the plastic frame attached to the front top cabinet surface, or a plywood frame holding both the loopstick and the PL-380 cabinet). Route the two 40/44 Litz wire leads through a shrink tubing length if desired (as shown in the photo at right), and direct them into the empty slot left by the removal of the stock loopstick (as shown in the photo). After ensuring that the new Litz wire leads are routed without stress and that the leads will not short adjacent circuitry, solder the two leads to the circuit board



connections previously used by the stock loopstick. Place a small strip of strapping tape (insulating type only) across these newly soldered leads, and carefully mate the front and back cabinet sections together, routing the Litz wires through the empty hole left by removal of the wrist strap. Reinstall the four cabinet screws and the three AA batteries, and check for normal operation.

A New World of AM and LW Sensitivity The installation of this 7.5" loopstick transplant provides an astonishing increase in the PL-380's weak signal sensitivity on both the medium wave and long wave frequencies, making the model competitive for all types of DXing. On the AM band, the signal boost over the stock unit typically will be around 20 dBu on all frequencies, as shown in the test photo below. During daytime DX testing at local noon, the modified PL-380 was able to receive 15 fringe AM stations completely inaudible on the stock unit. To the author's surprise, the overall AM performance of this fixed-coil loopstick was found to be slightly superior to that of the E100 Slider models, even



after the Slider coils were peaked. This provides an obvious advantage of allowing a DXer to chase transoceanic DX during brief band openings, without the need to peak a coil each time a new frequency is selected.

A similar huge boost in LW sensitivity was observed on the modified PL-380, with the transplant unit receiving five beacons (at local noon) completely inaudible on the stock unit: 329-LAC, 344-XX, 348-MNC, 353-RNT, and 361-BF. Although this 7.5" loopstick transplant was designed to optimize AM sensitivity, because the final loopstick coil inductance value of 554 uH is far closer to the optimal LW inductance than the stock 233 uH value, this AM-oriented loopstick

upgrade provides the additional bonus of greatly improved LW sensitivity.

Summary As modified, this new PL-380 DSP model has the breakthrough AM sensitivity needed to complement its razor-sharp selectivity, providing a very competitive DXing package (in a very small size). For DXpeditioners and traveling DXers, it is a thrilling example of the recent DSP advances in Ultralight radios, and an exciting way to enjoy exotic DXing throughout the new year!

73 and Best Wishes, Gary DeBock

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