

# What's NEW

## Tell them you saw it in Monitoring Times

Larry Van Horn, New Products Editor

### 2011/2012 Guide to Utility Radio Stations

An effective shortwave monitoring post needs three key pieces for success – a good receiver, and good antenna, and a good reference resource.

The Internet offers a plethora of information but, as we've all learned, not all of it is accurate. Many frequency listings are sadly-dated copies of ages-old files and can't be trusted.

Fortunately, there are reliable sources as well, both on the net as well as from well-respected publishers. *MT* is certainly one of them, and Joerg Klingenfuss Publications is another.

The annual release of Klingenfuss's *Guide to Utility Radio Stations* is highly anticipated by serious monitors of the under-30 MHz spectrum. This year's 570 pages – his 26th edition – contain some 8300 frequency listings, involving nearly 4000 changes since last year!

Arranged in ascending frequency order from 9 kHz to 28 MHz, listings include call sign or ID, location, agency or licensee, service, and mode as known. A comments field provides additional information as applicable.

The guide book is not simply a frequency guide; it includes charts, tables, and highly informative chapters covering all aspects of receiving utility (non-broadcast) communications in the high frequency (HF) spectrum.

Comprehensive tables abound to help identify some of the unknowns. Call sign prefixes by country (Chapter 6) can be combined with variants shown in Chapter 5 to narrow down the type of service (amateur radio, maritime, aircraft, land mobile, etc.).

A select list of call signs issued by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) helps identify actual point-to-point, maritime, Coast Guard, and other major installations when their transmissions are received.

Of special interest to meteorology buffs is Klingenfuss's alphabetical-by-country list of global radiofacsimile and radiotelex services. HF Frequencies and scheduled broadcast times are provided. Additional NAVTEX SITOP-B meteorological broadcast schedules are given for 424, 490, and 518 kHz and are arranged by seacoast region.

Global meteorological coverage is provided by digital data transmissions throughout the HF spectrum. Klingenfuss has provided screen shots by the hundreds of these as transmitted by military and aeronautical interests around the world. Frequencies are shown for each illustration.

Although the Q code was originally developed for Morse code communications in order to

speed up the send/reply sequences between stations, it has grown into wide use among amateur radio operators in voice and data modes, as well as by maritime and aeronautical communicators. A comprehensive list of these signals is included in the Guide.

Another group of expedient abbreviations, the Z code, which was developed by Cable and Wireless, Ltd. for their messaging service, is now found in global use by many texting agencies, especially the military. This list is also provided in the guide.

Voice transmissions often include spelling for accuracy. While it would be understandable that "a is for apple," an international agreement has been reached to use words more familiar to a wide variety of languages; thus, "a is for alpha" in this table! The complete list of phonetics for the 26 letters is given.

The SINPO code is useful for reporting numeric values for various characteristics of a received signal; this information is of interest to the sender so he knows how well his signal is being received. The acronym stands for Signal strength, Interference, Noise, Propagation disturbance, and Overall quality. A table showing these and an expanded version for voice transmissions (SINPFEMO) are in the guide.

There is a table of emission designators used internationally to specify the bandwidths and character of their transmissions; for example, an AM broadcaster might be using 8K00A3EGN. This sequence of several letters and numbers defines the type of modulation (CW, SSB, AM, FM, etc.), the nature or content type of the modulation, (analog, digital, etc.), the nature of the information (voice, telegraphy, video, etc.), information type (mono, stereo, bandsplitting, etc.), multiplexing type (if present), and system type (ARQ, twinxplex, multitone, FEC, etc.).

The guide provides a list of the most likely types of modulations/bandwidth characteristics to be found while monitoring the spectrum.

A handy glossary of terms and their definitions regarding radio communications makes a good reference; it is combined with nomenclature of radio bands and frequency units.

For those stalwart maritime/aero monitoring enthusiasts, a convenient listing of discrete frequencies used worldwide on major world air routes for USB voice, as well as the bands used for maritime mobile are also listed.

This reference volume is a must for utilities listeners, and it's also available as a CD from Grove Enterprises and other *MT* advertisers.

– Review by Bob Grove, W8JHD

### Scanner Digest

When I first started in the hobby of radio listening, there were dozens of radio clubs you could join that published newsletter on a wide variety of radio related topics. Names like

NASWA, Newport News Radio Club, NRC, IRCA, SPEEDX, and the RCMA were staples in the hobby. But time and the internet have pretty much sent most clubs and their publications the way of the dodo bird.

Recently while doing some research on some material for *MT*, I was surprised to find that one of the early scanner publications from the Northeast U.S. is still around and publishing a regular newsletter – *Scanner Digest*.

Back in the early 1980s, a few scanner buffs in the Southeastern Pennsylvania and Southern New Jersey area got together and started to distribute an informal newsletter by mail. The early information, which was photocopied onto a few sheets of paper, was crude by today's standard, but at that time it was the only organized way that scanner monitors could share the information. The idea took off, and soon Les Mattson of Paulsboro, New Jersey headed up a staff of writers – "column editors" as he affectionately called them – and within a year or so he created what became known as the *Northeast Scanning News* or *NESN*.

In the mid-1990s there was some restructuring within the organization and the popular newsletter was renamed *The Scanner Club*. Les continued as publisher/editor until he surprisingly announced his retirement from his duties.

A group effort headed up by Lou Campagna decided that a publication of this type needed to continue, so with the support of many of the former column editors a new publication was born.

The premier issue of the *Scanner Digest* Newsletter debuted back in June 1998. The bi-monthly newsletter was formatted in an easy-to-read printed booklet and continued in printed form until the end of 2002.

High financial costs associated with the graphic layout, offset printing and mailing of a printed newsletter prevented the group from continuing the printed newsletter, so starting with Issue 22 in January 2003, the *Scanner Digest* began to produce the newsletter in the popular Adobe Acrobat PDF format, and now it's distributed electronically to subscribers via email.

If you were a fan of *NESN* or live in the Northeast U.S., drop by the *Scanner Digest* website ([www.scannerdigest.com/](http://www.scannerdigest.com/)) and sign up for this "free" electronic newsletter.

– Larry Van Horn, NFPW

Books and equipment for announcement or review should be sent to What's New, c/o Monitoring Times, 7540 Highway 64 West, Brasstown, NC 28902. Press releases may be faxed to 828-837-2216 or emailed to Larry Van Horn, [larryvanhorn@monitoringtimes.com](mailto:larryvanhorn@monitoringtimes.com).

When ordering or inquiring about the products mentioned in this column, be sure to tell them that you saw it in the pages of *Monitoring Times* magazine.