

# Report from Guatemala

F72-2-1

By Don Moore

Arriving in Cobán about 2pm, I viewed possibly the most developed city of its size in Central America. Its population is about 15,000. Cobán was the center of pre WWII German influence in Guatemala. This investment, accompanied by the agricultural and mineral wealth of surrounding Alta Verapaz Dept. has produced a modern small city with no visible sign of poverty. Surrounding the large central plaza is the cathedral, built in 1559, the huge mansion like Departmental Capitol Building - larger than any government building in Tegucigalpa - and various shops, restaurants and offices. And among all the people were hundreds of colorfully dressed Kekch' Indian women.

Arriving late afternoon, I spent the rest of the afternoon visiting SW station Radio Tezulután. The next morning though I made the trip to nearby San Pedro Carchá, a sister city of 6,000 three miles east. San Pedro Carchá is the center of Guatemala's silver industry. Very fine jewelry can be bought there, e.g. earrings at 75¢ a pair, and hand made, which I'm told by American women would cost seven or eight dollars in the states. While there I stopped in at Radio Imperial, the town's only station, officially on 930 khz, but well heard in Santa Bárbara on 925khz. I tried to talk to the manager, but he was a friendly sort - the only such person I encountered in Guatemala - and left me with the secretary. Playing her my cassette of reception, I then explained I wanted a veri letter, and what that was. To further clarify the matter I showed her a Spanish copy of the NRC Station manager's guide to DX pamphlet. I pointed out the Radio Millón QSL and explained something in that format. As she typed up the veri ltr I sat back and realized I really didn't mind being left with the secretary. In fact, as she was wearing a very transparent blouse and lacey low cut brassiere, I was rather enjoying it. Unfortunately that's probably why I didn't realize until after leaving the station the problem with my QSL. But I'm going to count it anyways. Afterall, it is on their stationery, and has the correct time, date, & frequency. So what if it says I heard Radio Millón?

While in Cobán, I noted that the station on 1350 is inactive. The town does have a new station however, A Radio Cultural on 1290khz, which appears to be Evangelical. The only other station in the area is Radio Norte, 680khz, in downtown Cobán. Note Radio Norte is the correct slogan, contrary to WRTH. It is the only one used on the air, and is the one painted on front of their building. They too are a regular in Santa Bárbara and I wanted to get a veri. However I waited until the last minute to visit the station & only two very busy DJs were there. So after an all too brief 24 hours in the Cobán area, I left for Guatemala City.

Guatemala City, here they just say Guatemala, or more simply, Guate; while to gringos its Guat City. Spanish colonial capital of Central America, federal capital of the shortlived united Central America of 1823-1838, it is still the cultural, educational, industrial, and commercial capital of this subcontinent. It is a busy metropolis of one and a quarter million; clean & full of beautiful parks and wide boulevards. The excellent city bus service costs 10¢ a ride.

What of radio in Guatemala City? Channels are neatly spaced every 30khz, starting at 550khz, where the station is, oddly enough, Radio 560. The stations on 1030, 1270, & 1360 are located in Guat City, the WRTH listed Villa Victoria is the name of their building. The station on 610 khz no calls itself Radio Seiscientos Diez, while the one of 1420 now goes by Canal Catorce Viente, or, rarely, Radio Capital. Seems gringo station habits are creeping down here.

One of the odder things about Guat City radio is that so few stations have signs. Of those I visited, or at least passed by, Radio Rumbos, Super Radio, Radio Mundial, Radio Emperador, FM Estereo Azul, & even TGW, La Voz de Guatemala, had no signs advertising their presence. While Nuevo Mundo had one - an old fifties type neon one, looking very out of place on modern sixth avenue - there was no indication of sister station Radio Sensación. Nor at Ciro's Musical did the sign mention coowned La Voz de las Américas. Only the Adventist Station, Union Radio, completely advertised themselves, of those that I saw.

I guess this is partly because it is unnecessary in a city as well laid out as is Guat City. With the street address & zone number, any place can be found easily. And these zone numbers can be helpful to the DXer too. Guat City, as well as other principal towns of Guatemala, is divided into different zones. In ads businesses will give their addresses including the zone numbers - which are essential, e.g. 12 Calle 15-34, Zona 4. That is on 12th street, between 15 & 16 Avenues, in Zone #4. Almost every zone has its own, different 12th stree & 15th Ave, so the zones must be given. If you hear zones in ads you can be sure you have

a TG, as noother country in Central America, nor I believe, in South America, use the zona system.

I didn't have the opportunity to visit many stations, but the first I went to was Radio Rumbos, 1210khz. This station is logged rather regularly in NAM, in fact I heard them quite often back in Central PA; despite WCAU. They broadcast 24H a day with 5Kw, except from 0500-0900 GMT when they lower poer to one Kw, to save energy. The only other 24H station in the entire country is Ciro's Musical on 850khz. At Rumbos I talked with Rolando Bobadilla, the gerente, who told me a lot about Guat City radio, although I somehow came away learning very little about his station.

Guat City stations have been having financial problems as advertising is switching more and more to TV, as more and more families among the middle, and even to an extent, poorer, classes can afford TV. Guat City is divided as 15% upperclass, 35% middle class, & 50% poorer class. Whether in Guatemala or Honduras, it is not all that uncommon to see a wood shack with a dirt floor & a TV antenna on top, as people save their little spare cash for that ultimate in status symbols - a clean cement floor doesn't impress the neighbors as much. Anyways, due to this switching in ads, four commercial stations have closed down, those on 1060, 1090, 1120, & 1150. Also Radio Istanman on 1390 is using only 100 watts and irregular at that, to maintain their channel, preferring to use FM coverage. Also, Radio Faro Aviateca, 1540 khz, Guat City's only classical mx station, has dropped MW entirely, preferring to use only FM.

Radio Cultural, TGN & TGNA SW, which has been off the air on SW for several months & irregular on MW has been problems due to what Señor Bobadilla called "philosophical differences" with the govt of then Pres. Ríos Montt. He wasn't sure of the details & I didn't have a chance to visit the station & find out more.

Also it seems CAM is about to get its first stereo AM station. La RH, 1480khz, in Guat City, will be installing stereo before the end of the year. Señor Bobadilla did not know which system. La RH, not listed in the WRTH, and not to be confused with the 1470 station (now on 800khz) is owned by Carlos Manuel Arana Usorio, exgeneral, ex president (70-74) and un hombre muy rico with lots of money to spend on the station.

Before I left I got a veri ltr, but no pennant as they were out. Pat Martin must have got the last one, hi! Señor Bobadilla also gave me an eight page booklet on the August 1982 Multiplex ratings done in Guat City. His station had the booklet printed up.

Leaving Rumbos I then visited Super Radio, 760khz, about fifteen blocks away on busy Sixth Ave. One must walk up an old, wide staircase to get to the station; located in the second story, above some shops. The fact that the station is one of the older ones in Guat City is much reflected in its ancient equipment. The walls are decorated with record posters & cheesecake calenders. That's fairly common here. The only people there were four announcers, who, while friendly, didn't seem to know much, except that the station had received four overseas reports over the past several years. We chatted a while in the studio. Although most stations have signs up prohibiting anyone but the announcer on duty to enter the studio while on the air, these are usually conveniently ignored; while the DJ is talking into the mic no one talks above a whisper. I've never stopped to count how many 'on the air' studios I've been in. Soon they mentioned something about getting ready for the interview. While my Spanish is good, it took me a few minutes to realize who they were planning to interview. I was on the air almost twenty minutes, talking about my hobby, where I am from in the states, & how I liked Guatemala. Before the end of my trip I would be interviewed two more times. Once live on SW La Voz de Nahuála, where I would be introduced to the audience in Quiché, then interviewed in Spanish. Secondly a recorded interview would be made by Carlos Zipfel, of the Guatemala DX Club, for his weekly fifteen minute DX program on TGW.

With Carlos I visited TGW, La Voz de Guatemala, where we talked to several staff members. I learned that while their 640khz MW frequency is listed as 100kw, they have been using only about 30kw for a long time. The SW service has its own studio and is not normally // the MW service. Besides separate MW, FM, & SW studios, they have a large studio, complete with their own marimba, for broadcasting concerts.

The next morning I left for Lake Atitlán, & while there also visited the market town of Chichicastenango, as well as Nahuála. Lake Atitlán, with its surrounding volcanoes & small Indian villages: I find it difficult to believe there could possibly be anywhere more beautiful or enchanting in this world, nor with people so happy. If you want an overseas vacation, this is the place. In Guatemala the traditional culture is not a dead thing put on display for tourists. It is part of the everyday life of the people. Perhaps that's why everyone in Guatemala seems to have a smile.

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THE RATINGS IN GUATEMALA CITY

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These two charts are taken from an eight page booklet entitled "La Radio Es el Medio", printed up by Radio Rumbos, 1210 kHz. It summarizes the 1982 Multiplex ratings survey in Guatemala.

The top chart is interpreted as follows. Three time periods across top followed by an average (promedio). Stations are down the left column. S.S. and Fabuestereo are FM, VEA is the 1570 station. "Otras 20 emisoras" refers to 20 others not listed above. "Encendidos" is the percentage of the total Guat City population listening to the radio during that time period, and apagados, those not. The station percentages are not audience shares, but the percentage of the total Guat City population tuning in. E.g., Nuevo Mundo's average of 4% is a 10% audience share of the 39.4% average listening (Arbitron might disagree with me...).

Below are the ten most popular programs. Number one is the country's most popular news program. The others I've not heard but can judge from titles: #2 Children's Festival, #3 Marimba Music, #4 radio soaps, #5 not sure, Flash Gordan maybe?, #6 "Cleaning Clun", music for housewives, #7 soaps, #8 memory club, #9 "Little Mornings in Your House", #10 "Guatemalan Hour" (Chapino is a slang term like Yankee).

The booklet is of little practical DX use but interesting nonetheless.

If anyone is interested I can photocopy and air mail it to you for \$2.00 US, cash only please. It is entirely in Spanish, but is rather easy to understand.

While on booklets, another one I just got is a 38 page (20 pages photocopied) one on Emisoras Unidas in Honduras. Again not of practical DX use, but if you're interested in broadcasting down here, this contains station profiles and lots of operational details. At least a fair Spanish background is required for this booklet. I can photocopy and airmail it at \$4.00 US, cash only.

--- Don Moore, Apartado #3, Santa Barbara, SB, Honduras

RATING: RADIO CIUDAD GUATEMALA				
AGOSTO 1982				
Rating	7:00 - 12:00	12:00 - 14:00	14:00 - 17:00	PROMEDIO
Emisora				
NUEVO MUNDO	4.0	5.5	2.9	4.0
CIRO'S	4.3	2.6	3.8	3.8
SONORA	4.6	2.0	2.2	3.4
RUMBOS	4.0	3.1	2.2	3.3
MUNDIAL	3.2	2.7	3.4	3.2
5-60	3.7	1.6	1.8	2.8
FABULOSA	2.7	2.7	0.8	2.1
S.S.	2.0	1.4	0.9	1.6
VOZ DE LAS AMERICAS	2.1	1.1	0.6	1.5
CONTINENTAL	2.0	0.6	0.6	1.3
FABUESTEREO	1.6	1.2	1.0	1.3
VEA	1.8	0.9	0.5	1.3
VOZ DEL HOGAR	1.7	0.7	0.5	1.1
EMPERADOR	1.3	0.9	0.3	0.9
SEÑORIAL	1.2	0.4	0.6	0.9
Otras 20 Emisoras 16 A.M. 4 F.M.	7.9	7.2	5.7	7.2
ENCENDIDOS	48.9	34.6	27.8	39.4
APAGADOS	51.9	65.4	72.2	60.8

  

RADIO: CIUDAD GUATEMALA				
PRINCIPALES PROGRAMAS				
(L - V)				
PROGRAMA	EMISORA	HORARIO	RATING	DURACION DE MINUTOS
1 Independiente	Nuevo Mundo	12:00 - 13:00	7.8	60'
2 Festival de los Niños	Ciro's	16:00 - 17:00	5.8	60'
3 Chapimarimbas	Sonora	10:00 - 12:00	5.6	120'
4 Novelas	Nuevo Mundo	8:00 - 10:00	5.2	120'
5 Guatemala Flash	Fabulosa	12:00 - 13:00	4.7	60'
6 Club de la Limpieza	Ciro's	7:00 - 10:00	4.5	180'
7 Novelas	Mundial	7:00 - 8:00	4.3	60'
8 Club de los Recuerdos	Rumbos	7:00 - 11:00	4.2	240'
9 Mañanitas en su Casa	Sonora	7:30 - 10:00	3.9	150'
10 Hora Chapinísima	Ciro's	11:00 - 12:00	3.9	60'