

Quite obviously, many of us are pressed for time and don't get around to DXing as much as we would like to. Many of us cannot afford to lose precious sleep on a Monday morning. For the pressured worker or student, missing a good morning can be quite frustrating.

There is somewhat of a solution to the problem. It is a method that is used by Bruce Portzer, and I too have found it to be rewarding. It requires two essential items in addition to your receiver: a tape recorder and a timer. Any tape recorder will do, although a long-playing reel-to-reel model has the advantage of more recording time per side. For the timer, you should get ahold of one that automatically turns on and off. I am using a Micronta 24-hour timer, which is available at Radio Shack for \$7.95.

Simply plug your radio and recorder into the timer. Set the timer for the time that you want the radio to go on and the time you want it to shut off. For tube receivers, it is strongly recommended that you have the radio on a good 10 minutes before the intended period of time you want to record. This will make the receiver stabilized, so you won't experience drifting. Of course, the evening before, have your radio warmed up for 10-15 minutes before you tune to the frequency you desire. Graveyarders are best, although this method should be tremendous for CPC tests, POP tests, frequency checks and s/ons, as in the case of sunrise DX.

You simply sleep through the experience. The next time you have time on your hands, go back over your tape and see what you have. I hope that this might encourage more people to participate in the CPC tests which certain individuals have worked so hard to arrange. Quite obviously, you are limited to one frequency, unless you own two receivers and a stereo tape recorder. For the foreign DXer, this is a great way to make spot checks on radio conditions on the mornings you can't listen. Simply recording a key TP/TA frequency will give you an idea as to how good radio conditions were.--by Paul Petersky

While Paul recognizes that a receiver drifts and suggests turning it on 10 minutes before the time period intended to be recorded occurs, one should note that unless the tape recorder is on a different timer, you will have an abundant collection of nothing on the beginning of each reel of tape.

I find a better solution is to leave my tube-type Hammerlund HQ-150 on all night and just turn the tape recorder on-and-off. Despite having the set warmed up, I find a minor line voltage change will cause the receiver to drift if I set the unit up during the evening hours - thus I'll re-fine-tune the HQ-150 just before I go to bed between 2300 and 2400, normally. If I tune the set around 2000 or 2100, it will be 2 or 3 kc off once the load is taken off the lines around here and the voltage increases.

(These last two comments, of course, do not apply if one has a transistor set, as that locks in without drift - as I used to do with my Knight R-195.)

For the usual run-of-the-mill 15-to-30-minute specials or a spot check of a particular frequency, I find the auto-level-record feature of my cassette recorder to be most helpful. As I take audio out of the receiver ahead of the volume control, I don't have to worry about receiver volume setting or recording level on the tape recorder.

For longer specials, or a lengthy monitoring of a SRS or SSS DX frequency - like 1560 and 1580, respectively, here - I use my stereo reel machine (Roberts 721). I run WWV or CHU in the second channel to make it easy to check every 15 minutes without having to listen to the whole tape. On this machine, however, I usually run the record level conservatively, as it is easier to boost a low level than decipher an overloaded tape. (Don't run it too low, Tom, though, or you'll lose the signal in the tape noise!)

In any case, I suggest anyone seriously using the tape recorder modify their receiver(s) to take the audio out of the set ahead of the volume control. Thus it makes little difference how you set the listening level on phones or speaker. A short piece of co-ax between the hot side of the volume control and a phono jack mounted on the back panel will do the trick. Those with an ac/dc set, of course, should not effect this change - a shock hazard. Use a patch cord with clips to the speaker.--by Tom Sundstrom