

USING THE STEREOPHONIC DECODER IN YOUR BRAIN

By Cary Simpson

Here's something I'd like you to try, to see whether you can make it work. I believe that it works for me.

First, each person with normal hearing hears stereophonically, receiving sounds in each ear, and at a different time, perhaps thousandths of a second apart. But, the fact that there are two separate ears receiving the sounds enables the human mind to "tune out" unwanted sounds, and focus sharply on the one we want to hear.

When someone loses the hearing in one ear, this ability to focus is lost. Try it for yourself. Plug one ear with your finger and note that all of the background noises in the room suddenly become noticeable, and annoying.

Now, think of the typical graveyard channel on the AM Band, or one of the regionals with lots of post-sunset signals. When you listen to it on a radio speaker, or headphones, it all comes at you together, and it's impossible for your brain to "tune out" unwanted parts of what you hear, since you are receiving the sound monaurally.

But, what if you were to listen with two pairs of headphones, from separate radios? Could this "difference" be significant enough that your mind might be able to "tune out" or exclude unwanted sounds?

To test this, I used two separate "Walkman" type receivers, of different makes, and put a headphone from each set on each ear. Then I tuned to a noisy frequency, making sure that I had the same one on both radios. Then, taking one in each hand, I turned one of the radios, so the loop inside brought up a tiny amount of audio from a station that was not audible on the other radio, since it wasn't pointed in the same way.

I found that I could then "tune out" in my mind much of the sound of all of the other stations. If I could hear the station on both radios, it wasn't as clear in my mind, unless it became dominant on the frequency.

But, the experiment was not limited to Graveyard Channels. Especially interesting was the frequency, 1410 KHz, where I was able to pull a Black Gospel station from Mobile, Alabama, out of the mud and listen for some time, in spite of the fact that WING, Dayton, Ohio, was dominant on the frequency. I could not null it out by moving the two Walkmans, but, by turning one of them so Mobile could be heard, while it was not audible on the other one, my mind could exclude or ignore WING's CNN News, and I could concentrate on the preaching from Mobile.

One of the things that stereophonic hearing gives us is the ability to determine the direction from which a sound comes, by the slight delay in the sound getting to the second ear. Sounds from directly overhead can't be located, since the sounds reach both ears simultaneously. But, with two Walkmans, there is not any real time delay in getting to the second ear. So, there is no sensation of hearing sounds from one ear or the other. Even when "tuning out" unwanted sounds and focussing on one, it does not seem to come out of one of the headphones.

I would appreciate it if other DXers would try this experiment and see if it helps you to focus in on "wanted" stations and pull them out of the mud. If so, it could make an interesting additional way, beyond nulling with a loop antenna or pair of antennas, and doing the "nulling" in your brain.