

December 25, 2010 – Volume 48, Number 15s – Edition 1523 – ISSN 899-9733

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from the Editors of DX Monitor!

DX TEST

On the World Wide Web, you can also access DX Test information at www.dxtests.info any time.

NEW MEMBER UPDATE

The International Radio Club of America is very proud to welcome Tim Tromp of Muskegon, MI (SDXM) and welcomes back Steven Wiseblood, now living in Harlingen, TX (SDXM). Report your DX as much as you can to your editors!

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

This is the first of two SDXM-only editions of DX Monitor for this volume. Next week's edition is a double issue of the hardcopy edition. Our next SDXM-only issue will be on April 23, 2011. A schedule for the remainder of the volume appears in this issue, as well as the latest IRCA Technical column.

2011 IRCA Convention – Colorado Springs, CO

The convention will be held June 23-25, 2011 at the Airport Value Inn (<http://www.airportvalueinn.com>) located on the east side of Colorado Springs at 6875 Space Village Avenue, Colorado Springs 80915. IRCA has set aside a special block of rooms with a special reservation rate of \$69.99/night (regularly \$79.99/night during the summer months), please call the hotel directly at (719) 596-5588 or toll-free (800) 596-5588 to book the special rate (the special rate is only available over the phone), views of the rooms can be seen on their website.

The Colorado Springs Airport is located about 5 miles south of the hotel and is a relatively easy drive from the airport to the hotel (taxis are available at the airport, the hotel doesn't have a shuttle). Convention registration is \$30, please send registrations to: Robert Wien 2910 North Powers Boulevard, #106, Colorado Springs, CO 80922. If you wish to donate items for the auction, they can also be sent to this address as well, all AM radio-related donations are welcome. The convention will include radio station tours (specifics to be announced later), an AM transmitter tour around the city, DX quiz with prizes, business meeting, banquet, and the traditional Saturday night auction. The banquet will be held at the Golden Corral Buffet located on 1970 Waynoka Road (near Powers/Palmer Park Blvd., about 4 miles NW of the hotel) Saturday night 6/25/11 at 6 PM (we will have a room reserved at the Golden Corral, it is a 'pay-your-own-way' all-you-can-eat-buffet, cost is approximately \$10/person (NOTE: COST OF BANQUET IS SEPARATE FROM CONVENTION REGISTRATION FEE), beverage extra, to see the menu, go to <http://www.goldencorral.net>), with the auction to occur in the hotel meeting room after the banquet at approximately 8 PM. (Thanks to Mike Sanburn, KG6LJU, for the information.)

Winterfest 2011 – Collinsville, IL

It's not often that a DX club puts in a blurb about a Hamfest. These are great places to find wire and other materials for an antenna or other project, or even a good new or used receiver. (I should know, I picked up my current shortwave receiver, a Sangean ATS-803A, at a Hamfest, as well as my HF Amateur Radio transceiver, an ICOM IC-745.) The St. Louis and Suburban Radio Club (WØSRC/WØDCW), of which your Editor-in-Chief is a member, presents **Winterfest 2011**. The Hamfest will be held at the Gateway Convention Center in Collinsville, IL (Interstate 55/70 at Illinois 157; you can also use the Horseshoe Lake Road exit off of Interstate 255) on Saturday, January 29, 2011. For more information, go to www.slsr.org

BROADCASTING INFORMATION

Lee J Freshwater – 414 SE 3rd St – Ocala FL 34471

Email: EDXR-at-AMLOGBOOK-dot-COM

F.C.C. FINES

WQOR Olyphant, PA In this Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture, we find that J.M.J. Radio, Inc. the licensee of radio station WQOR in Olyphant, Pennsylvania, apparently willfully and repeatedly violated Section 73.1125(a) of the Commission's Rules by failing to maintain a management and staff presence at the Station WQOR main studio. We conclude that J.M.J. Radio is apparently liable for a total forfeiture in the amount of ten thousand dollars. On November 25, 2009, an agent from the Enforcement Bureau's Philadelphia Office conducted an inspection of Station WQOR's main studio, which was located inside a church building at St. Joseph Oblate Seminary, 1880 Highway 315, Pittston, Pennsylvania. A church employee escorted the agent to the station's main studio on the second floor of the church building. The agent found that the main studio was locked. When the church employee opened the door for the agent, the agent found no station personnel present. The church employee reported that no one associated with Station WQOR works at the main studio location and the room is always locked. He further reported that, although he was not associated with Station WQOR, he often helped the station engineer if he needed any assistance at the main studio. After speaking to the church employee, the agent contacted the station engineer by telephone and requested his assistance with the inspection. The station engineer arrived at the main studio within thirty minutes and the agent conducted the inspection. In response to questions about staffing at the main studio, the station engineer reported that the room was always locked and that there were no designated full-time or part-time personnel at the main studio. The station engineer also reported that he usually came to the main studio once a week to review Emergency Alert System (EAS) log printouts and perform any necessary maintenance. The agent advised the station engineer that the station must maintain a presence at its main studio during normal business hours. On December 17, 2009, another FCC agent attempted to conduct a follow-up inspection at Station WQOR's main studio at 1880 Highway 315 in Pittston, Pennsylvania. The agent observed that there were no employees at the main studio to facilitate an FCC inspection or to provide public access. The agent then contacted the licensee and conducted a phone conversation with an individual identified in the station records as a Director and Officer of J.M.J. Radio. She acknowledged that the main studio does not have any designated personnel. The agent advised the J.M.J. employee that the station must maintain a presence at its main studio during normal business hours. The J.M.J. employee stated that she was not aware of the main studio requirement and would thereafter staff the station's main studio as required. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that, pursuant to Section 503(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and Sections 0.111, 0.311, 0.314 and 1.80 of the Commission's Rules, J.M.J. Radio, Inc. is hereby NOTIFIED of this APPARENT LIABILITY FOR A FORFEITURE in the amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for violations of Section 73.1125(a) of the Rules. 1210.

KCKX Stayton, OR In this Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture we find that Donald D. Coss ("Coss"), licensee of station KCKX(AM), in Stayton, Oregon, apparently willfully and repeatedly violated Section 73.1745(a) of the Commission's Rules by failing to operate in accordance with the authorized nighttime power specified on the station's license. We conclude that Coss is apparently liable for a forfeiture in the amount of six thousand dollars. On April 22, 2010, in response to a complaint that Station KCKX(AM) was not lowering power at night, an agent from the Enforcement Bureau's Portland Office monitored the Station KCKX(AM) signal from a location approximately one kilometer from the station's antenna prior to the local sunset of 8:00 p.m. The agent then conducted field strength measurements which resulted in a value of approximately 115 mV/m. After local sunset, the Portland agent again conducted field strength measurements from the same location, which produced the same value of approximately 115 mV/m. On April 23, 2010, the Portland agent returned to Stayton and monitored Station KCKX(AM). Using the same procedures as on April 22, 2010, the agent measured the field strength of Station KCKX(AM) at 115 mV/m prior to the local sunset time and at 115 mV/m after the local sunset time. Therefore, the agent determined that Station KCKX(AM) did not reduce power appropriately for nighttime operation. In addition, on April 26, 2010, the Portland agent inspected Station KCKX(AM) at its control point located in Woodburn, Oregon. Station KCKX(AM) is authorized to operate with a non-directional pattern on 1460 kHz with 1000 watts during daytime hours and 15 watts during nighttime hours. The Portland agent requested a demonstration of a reduction of the authorized operating daytime power of 1000 watts to the authorized nighttime power of 15 watts. A technical representative from Station KCKX(AM), after consulting with a contract engineer by telephone, attempted to dial out preprogrammed codes to the transmitter site to demonstrate the power reduction. The technical representative was not able to reduce the nighttime power to 15 watts for nighttime operation. During an interview with the Portland agent, the owner of Station KCKX(AM) stated that he was aware of the requirement to reduce the operating power to the authorized power levels for nighttime operation but stated that it was too expensive to maintain the calibrated time-keeping devices, power switching devices, and other equipment necessary to effect the timely change in power. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that, pursuant to Section 503(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and Sections 0.111, 0.311, 0.314 and 1.80 of the Commission's Rules, Donald D. Coss is hereby NOTIFIED of this APPARENT LIABILITY FOR A FORFEITURE in the amount of six thousand dollars for apparently willfully and repeatedly violating Section 73.1745(a) of the rules.

KABR ISLETA, NM In this Forfeiture Order, we issue a monetary forfeiture in the amount of five thousand, six hundred dollars to The Alamo Navajo School Board, Inc., licensee of KABR(AM), Isleta, New Mexico ("Station"),¹ for its willful violation of Section 73.3539 of the Commission's Rules by failing to timely file a license renewal application for the Station, and its willful and repeated violation of Section 301 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, by engaging in unauthorized operation of the Station after its authorization had expired. On February 13, 2007, the Bureau issued a Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture in the amount of seven thousand dollars to Licensee for these violations. As noted in the NAL, Licensee's renewal application for the Station's license term was due on June 1, 2005, four months prior to the October 1, 2005, expiration date. Licensee did not file the application until January 12, 2006, over three months after the Station's license had expired, and provided no explanation for the untimely filing of the renewal application. Licensee submitted a response to the NAL on January 11, 2008. On November 22, 2010, Licensee filed a separate Supplement to Response to Notice of Apparent Liability attaching financial information to support its claim of financial hardship. In its Response, Licensee asserts that the proposed forfeiture should be cancelled because: payment of the proposed forfeiture would cause it financial hardship due to its limited financial resources, it made a good faith effort to comply with the Rules in a timely manner, and it has a history of overall compliance with the Rules. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED, pursuant to Section 503(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and Sections 0.283 and 1.80 of the Commission's Rules, that The Alamo Navajo School Board, Inc. SHALL FORFEIT to the United States the sum of five thousand, six hundred dollars for willfully violating Section 73.3539 of the Commission's Rules and willfully and repeatedly violating Section 301 of the Act.

LISTINGS COURTESY OF THERADIOJOURNAL.COM, 100000WATTS.COM, [F.C.C. DAILY DIGEST, AMLOGBOOK dot COM](http://F.C.C.DAILYDIGEST.AMLOGBOOK.COM)

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER AND CONTRIBUTOR LISTINGS:

SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- Northern California's only Persian radio station is looking for new equipment after a burglary Thanksgiving night. Radio Bamdad, which broadcasts on 1690 AM in Sacramento, was broken into after the station went off the air. The station's president said thousands of dollars in equipment was stolen. "All the equipment -- microphone, mixers and, as you can see, nothing is left," said station president Moe Golshani. Golshani said he bought more computers and telephones and is hoping to have the station ready for broadcast by Monday.

Sun Coast Radio Offers 30-Second Spot For \$1 To illustrate the potential of expanded coverage from simulcasting Oldies/UF Sports **WZCC-AM** CROSS CITY, FL and **WLQH-AM** CHIEFLAND, FL **SUN COAST RADIO** is now offering new local **advertisers** a barebones introductory rate of \$1 for a 30-second spot. "These ads will be broadcast on both radio stations reaching a whole new audience of potential customers," a station press release noted. "Through membership in the local Chambers of Commerce and partnerships with local government, civic, business, and other **media** leaders we hope to **promote** our local businesses and help build our local economy."

Contributors:

Dale Park, Honolulu HI (DP-HI)

12/18/10 0900 We have made a minor change in the column as we decided to separate the FCC GRANTS and APPLICATION listings. I think it will be easier to understand this way. (and easier for me to organize- hi) 73's. fresh

WESTERN DX ROUNDUP

Nancy Johnson – 265 Waterton Way – Billings MT 59102-7755
E-mail: NancyJohnson@prodigy.net

WDXR DEADLINES: Each Friday. Please use Eastern Time.

REPORTERS FOR THIS ISSUE:

- (BB) **Bill Block**-7716 E. Thelma Drive-Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 billwblock@msn.com
Drake R8
- (GH) **Glen Hansen**-64985 Olson Rd.-Deer Island, OR 97054 gbhansen2@q.com
Drake R8B, R 390A, TMC GPR-90, Hammarlund SP-600, 800' wire E-W, Kiwa loop
(borrowed from Dennis Vroom)
- (NP) **Nigel Pimblett**—331 5 Street-Dunmore, AB T1B 0J9 ntjp@shaw.ca
Kenwood R-5000, Perseus SDR and Wellbrook array
(NP-AB1) DX'ing at Lamont, AB with Perseus SDR and Beverages
- (GS) **Garry Stoklas**-P.O. Box 117-Imperial, CA 92252-0117 jergar@sbcglobal.net
Kenwood R-1000 with 4 foot loop

 560 WEBC **MN**, Duluth 11/22 0858 ESPN programming, ID at the hour "ESPN Radio 560, WEBC Duluth-Superior." (NP-AB1)

- 570 CKWL **BC**, Williams Lake 11/21 0800 came up to the top with dual ID "You're listening to CKCQ 100.3 in Quesnel and CKWL 570 in Williams Lake, the Wolf," then back into country music. (NP-AB1)
- 690 KTSM **TX**, El Paso 11/21 0400 caught partial ID through CBC Vancouver "...and AM, El Paso." (NP-AB1)
- 800 CJAD **QC**, Montreal 11/20 0002 list of traffic disruptions, weather, ID as "CJAD 800." (NP-AB1)
- 860 CJBC **ON**, Toronto 11/20 0000 woman in French, mixing with the CBC French station from Gravelbourg, SK. (NP-AB1)
- 880 KRVN **NE**, Lexington 12/11 0100 male with ID and news. In strong for several minutes on Drake with Kiwa loop. Last heard in 2005. (GH-OR)
- CKLQ **MB**, Brandon 11/21 1300 audible under CHQT with news and mention of organization in Brandon (NP-AB1)
- 910 KCJB **ND**, Minot 11/21 under Drumheller with "KCJB Minot" ID and Fox news. (NP-AB1)
- 970 KBUL **MT**, Billings 12/13 0850 with traffic & weather and "Newsradio 970.com" at 0855. (BB-AZ)
- 1020 KDKA **PA**, Pittsburgh 11/20 0000 "... the Voice of Pittsburgh, Newsradio 1020 KDKA" ID, into CBS news. (NP-AB1)
- 1060 KGFX **SD**, Pierre 11/20 1658 interview with football coach, ID as "... South Dakota's pioneer radio station, on the air since 1916, 1060 KGFX Pierre..." (NP-AB1)
- KIJN **TX**, Farwell 11/13 0601 ID by man in Spanish mentioning "Jesus Radio." (NP-AB)
- 1130 KFAN **MN**, Minneapolis 11/20 2359 mixing with CKWX with Fox Sports, ID as "AM 1130 KFAN, Minneapolis-St. Paul, The Fan." (NP-AB1)
- 1150 KAGO **OR**, Klamath Falls 12/13 0100 heard faint ID in the mix. Not often heard lately. Weak using Drake with Kiwa loop. (GH-OR)
- KIMM **SD**, Rapid City 11/20 1659 auto racing coverage, ID at the hour "1150 AM KIMM Rapid City, and 106.7 FM K294BT Rapid City." (NP-AB1)
- 1170 CBRH **BC**, New Hazelton 11/22 1457 parallel with Prince Rupert's 860 CFPR and Daybreak program. (NP-AB1)
- 1190 KVCU **CO**, Boulder 12/16 1854 with "The AM Revolution." (BB-AZ)
- KEX **OR**, Portland 12/14 0915 with traffic and weather. (BB-AZ)
- KFXR **TX**, Dallas 12/13 0843 with weather then stock market report. (BB-AZ)
- 1210 WPHT **PA**, Philadelphia 11/21 1958 coming through KHAT with call letter ID and into disclaimer for paid program. (NP-AB1)
- 1230 KTRF **MN**, Thief River Falls 11/21 0400 ID"... 1230 radio, KTRF, Thief River Falls, Minnesota." (NP-AB1)
- KLAV **NV**, Las Vegas 12/14 1900 with "You're listening to KLAV Las Vegas." (BB-AZ)
- KYVA **NM**, Gallup 12/15 2059 with "KYVA Gallup, New Mexico." (BB-AZ)
- 1240 KFBC **WY**, Cheyenne 11/13 0500 ID at the hour "You're listening to 1240 KFBC, Cheyenne, Wyoming," then ABC news. (NP-AB)
- 1290 KKAR **NE**, Omaha 11/21 0500 just caught ID through a couple of others "Newstalk 1290... KKAR." (NP-AB1)
- 1340 KIKO **AZ**, Miami 12/11 1922 with "KIKO" then oldies. (BB-AZ)
- KYNS **CA**, San Luis Obispo 12/11 0900 with "KYNS San Luis Obispo" then news. (BB-AZ)
- KLOO **OR**, Corvallis 12/1 0000 news, talk show of some sort. Very weak in a noisy mix on Drake with E-W wire. Very seldom heard. (GH-OR)
- 1350 KTIX **ID**, Nampa 12/12 1900 with "KTIX Nampa-Boise." (BB-AZ)
- 1360 KHNC **CO**, Johnstown 12/11 2059 with "KHNC Johnstown-Denver." (BB-AZ)
- 1380 KSRV **OR**, Ontario 12/4 0030 heard ID with C&W music. Really fighting it out with KRKO, on Drake with Kiwa loop. (GH-OR)
- KHEY **TX**, El Paso 12/11 2156 with "KHEY.com" and "El Paso's only sports station." (BB-AZ)
- 1400 KBRB **NE**, Ainsworth 11/13 0300 ID at the hour as "KBRB, Ainsworth, AM 1400 Nebraska." (NP-AB)
- 1440 KAZG **AZ**, Scottsdale 12/10 1854 oldies song ended then "1440 Arizona Gold." Very strong signal with significant slop from KWST 1430 only about 5 miles from my location. (GS-CA)
- 1450 KFLS **OR**, Klamath Falls 12/10 0130 male with ID in a noisy jumble, ad for Petsmart. Weak using Drake and Kiwa loop. (GH-OR)
- 1460 KENO **NV**, Las Vegas 12/10 1740 ads for Mariana Market and then the Cross Roads Gun Show in Las Vegas followed by "KENO." Occasional strong interference from XECB. (GS-CA)
- 1470 KELA **WA**, Centralia 11/13 0859 local ads, then ID as "Lewis County's news leader... AM 1470, KELA Centralia-Chehalis," then into Fox news. (NP-AB)
- ?CJVB? **BC**, Vancouver 12/11 0027-0037 a woman &: a man speaking in what I thought was Spanish but with things like "pow pow cheow" and "cow cow cheow" said several

- times and "Radio International China" at 0034. I have listened to this station on line since and am convinced that it is CJVB. (GS-CA)
- 1530 KDSN IA, Denison 11/20 1659 promo for KCCI (TV), ad for insurance during Iowa Hawkeye coverage. (NP-AB1)
- 1540 KXEL IA, Waterloo 12/10 0033 caught tail end of weather report and ID on Drake with Kiwa loop. Not often heard, last caught back in January. (GH-OR)
- 1590 KDJS MN, Willmar 11/20 1701 call ID "Solid Gold 1590 KDJS" heard through a couple of others. (NP-AB1)
- 1600 KYBC AZ, Cottonwood 12/14 2328 Christmas song ended then comments about holiday weight gain then "KYBC 96.3 FM." Moderate QRM and interference from KAHZ in Pomona, CA. (GS-CA)
- 1610 WQIV246 ND, Ellendale 11/20 1604 tape loop with mention of emergency preparedness, call sign. (NP-AB1)
- WQBV569 WA, Yakima 11/20 0758 tape loop with woman giving road info, call ID. (NP-AB1)
- CHHA ON, Toronto 11/20 0559 O'Canada was heard under a couple of other signals, presumably signing on. Heard again with call ID at 0700, and mention of Voces Latina. (NP-AB1)

UNIDS

- 1590 UNID 11/27 1730 SRN news, many "Freedom 1590" ID's and Hugh Hewitt show. Fairly strong and alone, looping E-W on Drake with Kiwa loop. (GH-OR)

Happy Holidays everyone! We have had snow on the ground here since the week before Thanksgiving so it looks like we will definitely have a white Christmas. Nancy 12/17 2100

CENTRAL DX ROUNDUP

John C Johnson – 265 Waterton Way – Billings MT 59102-7755
E-mail: John_Johnson@prodigy.net CDXR reports ONLY: cdxr@ircaonline.org

RIDING GAIN

- [TMJ-IL] Tom Jasinski, Joliet, IL amdixer@core.com
 Drake R8A and Quantum Loop.

DOWN THE DIAL

- 1510 WLRB IL, Macomb. 12-9 with WLAC nulled. 02:45 noticed this daytime on the air due to transmitter automation issues. Oldies/Adult Standards format. 03:45 caught a maila voice call letter ID. Noticed this a few days earlier at 20:00 also. [TMJ-IL]

unID

- 1480 unID 12-9 unID station running a 20 second steady tone repeating every 44 seconds from 02:00 to 06:15. No sign of any other audio. Had a NW/SE loop bearing. At times strong tone so suspect a Midwestern station. [TMJ-IL]

25 YEARS AGO

December 21, 1985 issue of IRCA's "DX Monitor" ... **Bill Harms** of Woodlawn, MD complained about TVI from numerous neighbors around his townhouse development ... **Mike Hardester** of North Versailles, PA said he rejoined the US Navy ... **Richard E. Wood** of Hilo, HI received a verie from WFLA 970 Florida for a new state.

OPEN MIKE

By the time you see this in print Christmas will have come and gone. Hope you had a great Christmas and are ready for 2011. This column was typed 12-18-10. 73, John

EASTERN DX ROUNDUP

Lee J Freshwater – 414 SE 3rd St – Ocala FL 34471
E-mail: EDXR-at-AMLOGBOOK-dot-COM

Deadlines: Saturdays 8 AM!!

STARS OF THE WEEK

- (KK-VA) Kraig Krist Manassas, VA.
 NRD-545 rx w/ KIWA Loop
 (WM-MD) William McGuire 2412 59th Place, Cheverly MD
 DX-398

LOGGINGS

- 540 FL WFLF Pine Hills 12/8 2200 Local Ads, Fox News Radio (WM-MD)

- 960 NC WCRU Dallas 12/7 1900 Religion ; ID; SRN News (WM-MD)
- 1040 NC WSGH Lewisville 12/9 1700 Spanish Talk heard; ID (WM-MD)
- 1340 OH WSTV Steubenville 12/14 1811 Mixing w/ talk and singing. WSTV with Pittsburgh Penguins hockey game. "AM 13-40 WSTV Steubenville...". (KK-VA)
- 1350 OH WARF Akron 12/15 1908 Mixing w/ other talk, more talk and singing. Local ad "Fox Sports Radio... WARF...". (KK-VA)
- 1360 CT WDRC Hartford 12/15 1820 Mixing w/ WNJC, WTOC, other talk and singing. Steve Mossburg Show. "The talk of Connecticut Michael Savage weeknights at 9...". (KK-VA)
- NJ WNJC Washington Township 12/15 1820 Mixing w/ WDRC, WTOC, other talk and singing. Talk. "... 13-60 AM WNJC Saturday mornings...". (KK-VA)
- NJ WTOC Newton 12/15 1820 Mixing w/ WNJC, WDRC, other talk and singing. Oldies. "This is WTOC...". (KK-VA)
- 1370 NY WXXI Rochester 12/14 2005 Mixing w/ WSPD, singing and oldies. Talk about Michael Jackson's new CD. "I'm Michael Martin for NPR News". "... tomorrow evening at 8 on WXXI...". (KK-VA)
- NY WXXI Rochester 12/8 1800 ID; local mentions (WM-MD)
- OH WSPD Toledo 12/14 2005 Mixing w/ WXXI, singing and oldies. Sean Hannity show. "13-70 WSPD". (KK-VA)
- 1390 NC WEED Rocky Mount 12/11 1909 Mixing w/ WSPO and WFBL. Oldies. "Old school 13-90". "... all of eastern Carolina.. old school... every night.. AM 13-90...". Local ads "Old school. Back to the day 13-90". "It is now official. North Carolina is now old school. Old school 13-90". (KK-VA)
- NY WFBL Syracuse 12/11 1909 Mixing w/ WEED and WSPO. "... 6 till 9 CNY Talk Radio". "WFBL weather...". (KK-VA)
- SC WSPO Charleston 12/11 1909 Mixing w/ WEED and WFBL. Sporting news radio. "... Sporting News Radio dot com...". "Weekdays at 3 on WSPO" into "Sporting News Radio" jingle. "13-90 WSPO the sports leader". (KK-VA)
- 1410 CT WPOP Hartford 12/11/2010 1902 EST. Mixing with KQV. OM with basketball game recap. Many mentions of Hartford. (KK-VA)
- PA KQV Pittsburgh 12/9 1800 "All News All The Time"; ID (WM-MD)
- 1430 ON CHKT Toronto 12/9 1900 Chinese Talk Heard (WM-MD)
- 1470 MD WJDY Salisbury 12/8 1700 ID under REL MXf (WM-MD)
- VA WBTX Broadway 12/8 1800 Religious mx hrd; Sign off (WM-MD)
- 1540 IA KXEL Waterloo 12/11 1849 Mixing w/ CHIN. "Sean Hannity Show". "15-40 KXEL. News talk 15-40 KXEL". (KK-VA)
- ON CHIN Toronto 12/11 1849 Mixing w/ KXEL. AD mentioning phone number "416 917 1456". Area code 416 is Toronto. "... Ottawa... China Radio International..." into CRI news. (KK-VA)

UN-IDEN

John J. Rieger's unidentified station on 1550 with the "ESPN 1550" identifier is most likely KESJ St. Joseph, MO. The station broadcasts ESPN Radio. St. Joseph is northwest of Kansas City on Interstate 29. It is a regular at this QTH, mixing with either WAZX Smyrna, GA or WPFC Baton Rouge, LA. – from EIC Eric Bueneman

Hope you are all ready for the Holidays.... Thanks to Kraig and William this week... Best to all... fresh 12-18 0830

DX WORLDWIDE – WEST / TROPICAL BAND DX

Patrick Martin – PO Box 843 – Seaside OR 97138
E-mail: mwdxer@webtv.net all times UTC

PAN AMERICAN DX ROUNDUP

- 650 MEXICO XEEJ Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, on 12/11/2010 @ 0407 UTC. Mexican music ended then something about Jalisco followed by "Radio Paraiso...." Moderate signal with interference from a second SS (XETNT) and KMTI in Utah. (GS-CA)
- 650 MEXICO XETNT Los Mochis, Sinaloa, on 12/11/2010 @ 0431 UTC. Mexican music ended then "Radio Sesenta Cinco" Then another song. Weak to moderate signal with interference from a second SS (XEEJ) and KMTI in Utah. (GS-CA)
- 760 UNID México on 12/10/2010 @ 0410 UTC. Mexican music ended then a man's voice with "La Radio Federales...." Probably XEABC in Mexico City. Strong interference from partially nulled KFMB in San Diego. (GS-CA)

- GS-CA GARRY STOKLAS, Imperial CA Jergar@sbcglobal.net

DXing with Kenwood R1000 and 4 foot Box Loop

Walter Salmaniw Hawaiian Report (11/29)

Had a rather sleepless night here in Poipu, Kauai so got up to DX at 04:55 AM local to DX from the lanai using the Eton e100 modified and found that conditions were much more "traditional" than I've experienced in quite some time. I monitored between 14:59 and 16:37 UTC. Earlier on things were decidedly Asiatic with many JJ stations being present, whereas the final sunrise timeframe swung around to a good Australian opening. Loggings were primarily from the lower half of the band. I'm still waiting to hear 1566 or 1575 here. I started at the top of the band and worked south, and then back again. Here are my results:

- 531 Poor at 16:03 to NW. 11/29.
- 549 Very good level ?Okinawa. My notes state JJ or KK (I have trouble telling the two apart, but there are no KK stations listed in PAL and just the Okinawa station listed for JJ, so perhaps them?
- 540 Samoa with English religious music (Christmas songs, "Happy Birthday, Jesus", etc... noted last year in November to be playing a lot of Christmas music as well at this early date), already at 15:43. Later at excellent level. 11/29.
- 558 Fair level at 15:41 to NW. Fair/good at 16:04. ?HLQH. 11/29.
- 567 Fair to good to NW but with splatter at 16:04. ?JJ or KK? 11/29.
- 585 Poor to fair. 11/29.
- 594 JOAK Tokyo at good/very good level except for splatter at 15:39. 11/29.
- 603 Poor early, but fair at 16:04. 11/29.
- 612 Finally, 4QR Brisbane at good level at 16:08, and good/very good at 16:25. //702. Also //630 at 16:38. 11/29.
- 630 CC (?CNR2) at good level at 15:40. At 16:26, this is ?4QN Townsville //612 at fair level. 11/29.
- 639 CC at fair level at 15:39. At 16:26, more likely Radio Fiji at poor level. 11/29.
- 657 Rumbly audio at 16:06 poor to fair. N. Korea. Fair at 16:27. 11/29.
- 666 Fair to good at 15:39 to NW. ?JOBK Osaka. Poor/fair at 16:28. 11/29.
- 675 Poor to fair at 16:07 to W, so presumed Vietnam. 11/29.
- 693 JOAB Tokyo at poor level due to splatter. See 774. 11/29.
- 702 2BL Sydney at good/very good level at 16:08 //612. 11/29.
- 738 RFO Tahiti, finally at only fair level at 16:09. 11/29.
- 747 7PB or 4QS Australia. Not sure which, but at fair to good reception at 16:09. 11/29.
- 747 JOIB Sapporo at fair level. See 774. 11/29.
- 774 JOUB Akita at good level with English lesson, but not the usual EE speakers that I'm used to at 15:35. //to 747, and 693 765: oriental station at good level, except for splatter. Piano at fair to good level around 16:09 to N/NW. 11/29.
- 783 Good to very good CC station at 15:33 with commercial programming. 11/29.
- 792 Poor early, and again at 16:11. English at 16:31 at fair level. 4RN Brisbane. 11/29.
- 855 4Q0/4QB Australia at fair level at 16:12, with slight het from N Korea. Don't recall this one noted very often. 11/29.
- 891 Poor. Poor/fair at 16:14 and seems DU ?4TAB 873: Fair reception at 16:13, DU ?2GB Sydney, or ?Newstalk ZB. Fair to poor at 16:32. 11/29.
- 909 Piano music at good level at 15:29. Difficult to know who this is. Could also be NZ Southern Star (Napier)? 11/29.
- 954 Poor/fair with music (early). 11/29.
- 963 Suspect DU at fair/good level at 15:27 with music. ?Southern Star, Christchurch. 11/29.
- 972 Fair/good reception to W with pop music at 15:26 ?Korea. 11/29.
- 1008 Poor to fair at 16:17 either 4TAB Brisbane, or Newstalk ZB. 11/29.
- 1035 English talk at fair strength at 16:17 ?//1008. Probably Newstalk ZB. 11/29.
- 1089 Good reception at 15:23 maximally W, but no details that would enlighten me to the origin. 11/29.
- 1098 This is a mystery to me. At 15:21 there was audio which varied between fair and excellent strength, and was NOT oriental. Rechecking at 15:58, there was still the same program. No Time pips at the TOH. By 16:36 UTC, there was only an OC. Me thinks that this is Radio Marshalls, even though PAL lists them signing off much earlier. If not them, who else??? 11/29.
- 1116 4BC Brisbane: Heard throughout the morning. This frequency should be considered as the bell weather DU station (perhaps along with 1386 Radio Tarana). When DU is open, so is this channel (noted this to be the case as well during my over night DXpedition to Rose Spit with Vlad Titarev back in September). Fair level at 15:20, very good at 15:45, and good still at 16:19. 11/29.
- 1170 Good reception from the west with Hindi music at 15:19. Yesterday, VOA was well heard here, but this transmitter is listed in PAL as being in VV at this time, but the music was not at all VV sounding. I still suspect this is the station, but who knows! 11/29.
- 1179 Poor, occ fair. Not able to be sure this wasn't 1180 from NAM, though. 11/29.

- 1224 Fair with music at 15:16 to NW. ?who. 11/29.
- 1260 Fair at 15:15, fair to good at 15:55 with music ?JOIR Sendai. 11/29.
- 1287 Poor early, but good reception with music at 15:53 to NW, so very possibly JOHR, Sapporo. 11/29.
- 1314 Same. 11/29.
- 1323 Poor early. 11/29.
- 1377 Poor/fair reception CC early. 11/29.
- 1404 Poor reception to NW early. 11/29.
- 1440 JOWF Sapporo at fair level at 16:14. 11/29.
- 1512 2RN Newcastle at poor level early. 11/29.
- 1530 Poor ?who. 11/29.
- 1548 4QD Emerald. Good reception right through from 15:03, 15:47 and 16:23 (very good at the latter time). 11/29.
- 1593 Poor reception early ?CNR1. 11/29.

That's it for an interesting morning at the dials.

IRCA TECHNICAL COLUMN

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WiNRADiO G31DDC Excalibur Software-Defined Receiver

reviewed by Jack Weber



The biggest development to affect MW DXing in recent years has been the ability to record the entire band for time-shifted offline DXing. Not everyone wants to listen in this way, but there's no denying that it's brought about a major shift in DXing possibilities and in many DXers' sleep patterns.

Up till now, Microtelecom's Perseus software-defined receiver has been the only radio to offer this capability. Other SDRs that work in a similar way, such as the RFspace SDR-IQ, are restricted to a narrower bandwidth and so have not had as much impact on MW DX. Now, for the first time, Perseus has a real challenger - the WiNRADiO G31DDC Excalibur. Like Perseus, Excalibur is a software-defined receiver that digitises the incoming signal directly at radio frequencies and can record enough bandwidth to cover the whole of the MW band. And, like Perseus, it has the benefit of very effective and flexible digital filters - something that's particularly useful on the MW band.

Having used Excalibur for some weeks now, I thought I'd offer some observations on its potential for MW DXing.

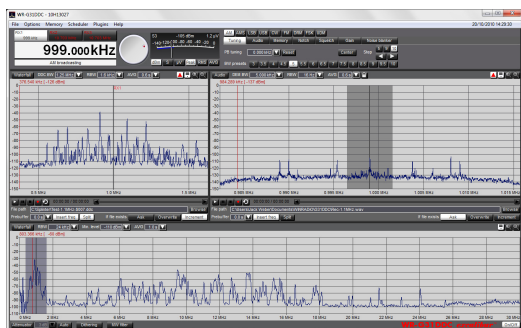
The hardware part of Excalibur comes in a screened box with a plastic outer shell, the same design that Winradio has used for all of its G3-series radios. It's small, light and unobtrusive. The only physical controls are a power button and an indicator light. At the back there's a power connector for the external 12 volt linear power supply, an antenna connector (SMA with a supplied BNC adapter), and a USB 2.0 connector for the cable that joins the receiver to your PC.

The minimum requirement for full operation is a 2GHz dual core CPU running Windows XP, Vista or 7. And, of course, it must have a free USB 2.0 port. None of this should present any problems these days, though it's worth trying to go above the minimum spec if at all possible. To allow for different computer performance levels, Excalibur lets you adjust the length of its digital filters. This trades filter sharpness against CPU load so you may get away with a PC below the minimum spec, but it probably won't provide the full range of filters and bandwidths. I'm using Excalibur with a 3GHz Core Duo PC running Windows 7 and it can comfortably handle the maximum settings at a CPU load of around 30%.

The audio output is fed via whatever soundcard you've selected as your default. Although Excalibur will work fine with the PC's built-in soundcard, it really does help to use a more upmarket card. You'll get lower noise, more dynamic range, better stability and simply a more intelligible sound, which should translate into more DX. The same, of course, is true when using any SDR.

Internally, Excalibur is what's known as a DDC (Digital Down-Conversion) receiver. The RF coming in from the antenna is digitised by sampling at 100 MS/s (100 million samples per second) and 16 bits. This allows Excalibur to see just under 50MHz of radio spectrum in one go. That's too much for subsequent processing so it needs to be converted down to a more manageable bandwidth by a mathematical technique called decimation. This reduces the full 50MHz to any one of 21 possible bandwidths ranging from 20kHz to 2MHz. Three of these bandwidths (1.25, 1.5 and 2MHz) are sufficient to capture the whole of the MW band, and the two larger ones let you include the NDB band and LW too. You can move this DDC bandwidth anywhere within the digitised 0-50MHz spectrum, which means that Excalibur can tune from 9kHz to 49.995MHz, though performance falls off above about 40MHz.

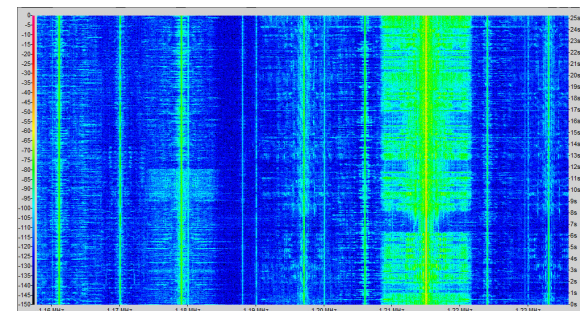
Within the currently selected DDC bandwidth you can receive any signal that's present. In fact, you can receive any three signals because Excalibur provides three independent receivers, each of which can have different modes, filters, AGC settings, etc and all of which can be used simultaneously. In reality, I've rarely found a need to use more than one. They can be useful if you're checking for parallel transmissions, though you can't check a MW signal against a possible SW match as that would be outside the DDC bandwidth. Excalibur can record the outputs of these receivers as audio, and it can also record the full DDC bandwidth for subsequent offline DXing.



Excalibur's resizable window is dominated by its three spectrum analyzers. The main receiver controls are grouped at the top. The wideband and audio recorder controls are in a band in the middle and can be hidden when not in use.

As with other SDRs, all the operational controls and displays appear on your computer screen. In contrast to Perseus, which has a fixed-size window, Excalibur's window is resizable which means that it can fit on anything from a smallish laptop to a big widescreen display, and you have the choice of filling the screen or leaving room for other windows. A variety of skins (colour schemes) allow you to choose an appearance that suits you.

The interface is dominated by three spectrum analyzers which show progressively narrower segments of the received spectrum. Stretching across the full width of the window at the bottom is the wideband display showing 0-30MHz or, if you choose, the full 50MHz. At top left is the DDC display showing whichever one of the 21 DDC bandwidths you've selected. At top right is the demodulator display which provides a detailed view for tuning and setting the receiver. Alternatively, you can use it to show the demodulated audio spectrum. All three panels can be resized relative to each other and all of them expand and contract together as you resize the window. In addition you can zoom in on each display, and both the wideband and DDC displays can be viewed as inverted waterfalls instead of spectrum graphs. All this offers tremendous flexibility and is a great help when DXing.



Both the wideband (0-30MHz) and DDC spectrum displays may be viewed as waterfalls.

Being able to see signals across a block of frequencies is invaluable both as a tuning aid and as a guide for adjusting various filters. In this respect, the Excalibur displays are as good as any I've seen. They're fast, accurate and offer a wide range of sensible adjustment options. Each display can optionally be averaged over a range of 0.1 to 2 seconds in order to reduce the effects of rapidly fluctuating noise and modulation and so help to reveal actual signals. The display data is stored in a sizable buffer, which allows you to scroll back in time by up to 50 seconds on the DDC waterfall and up to 10 minutes on the wideband display. Unfortunately, the waterfalls don't display time markers, there's only a relative scale that shows how many seconds you've scrolled through. That's not particularly helpful. It would be nice also if there was a control for reducing the refresh rate of the waterfall as a slow, long duration waterfall can be useful for checking activity over a longer period of time. Incidentally, there appear to be no controls for changing the visual dynamic range of the waterfalls and none are mentioned in the manual, but they do exist. You just need to right-click on the level scale at the left of the waterfall.

The demodulator display can resolve down to either 1Hz or 2Hz depending on the current DDC bandwidth. This is more than adequate for normal DXing, but may not be enough to satisfy serious enthusiasts of carrier offset tracking. Though for that sort of work, you'd probably want to send the audio output to a more specialised application such as Spectrum Laboratory anyway. At 2.5 ppm, frequency stability is not quite as solid as on most top-level receivers. Again it's more than good enough for normal DXing, but less suitable for precise frequency measurements. A professional version of Excalibur with tighter frequency control and other improvements is due, but there's no definite indication yet of cost or availability. One very helpful feature is that you can easily calibrate Excalibur to any known frequency rather than having to use a specific standard frequency such as 5 or 10MHz. This means that, in Europe, you could use BBC R4 on 198kHz, the Russian frequency standard stations on 4996 and 9996kHz, or indeed any other station that's known to be reliable.

All the usual reception modes are available and there's even a built-in DRM decoder, though you'll need to purchase a software key for €49 to make use of it. I know DRM is unpopular with many DXers and its future looks increasingly uncertain, but if you want to try it, this decoder works very well and is far more convenient than using an external application. If you already own the DRM key from an earlier G3 model, it will work with Excalibur. The Synchronous AM detector lets you select either or both sidebands, which is excellent. And the latest software version has tightened it up to avoid the problem of it being captured by other nearby carriers. This is just what's needed when listening for MW splits with a local carrier 1 or 2kHz away. It works really well, pulling the audio up and stabilising selective fading.

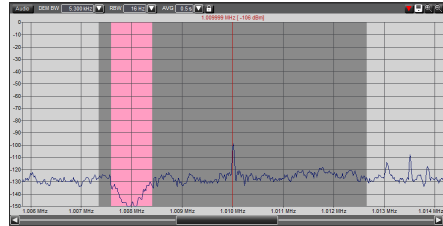
Demodulation bandwidth (i.e. selectivity) can be adjusted by dragging the on-screen passband edges with your mouse, by entering a numerical value or by selecting from a range of preset values. The minimum bandwidth is 10Hz, which should make NDB DXers happy, and the maximum is 33.333kHz, which is more than you'll ever need. Filter quality is absolutely superb with near-vertical sides (especially if you can turn up the filter length) and minimal ripple. My only quibble is that the AM filtering is an exception to this, being rather broad and soft. A sharper-edged option to match the other modes would have been useful. Anyway, it's not a big problem as you're more likely to be using SSB or Sync AM for DX reception.

One extra level of filtering that's provided is an audio bandpass filter. On its lower edge this is very useful for reducing rumble, and the top edge can provide the steeper cut-off that's needed when using AM mode. Beware though, because it can also catch you out. Sometimes when you try to widen the demodulation bandwidth, nothing appears to happen. The reason is that you've inadvertently left the audio passband at a narrower setting so whatever changes you're making to the

demodulation filter are being lost. The easy solution is to always leave the audio filter wide, but for more critical listening you'll get the best results by setting it the same as or just a bit wider than the demodulator filter.

This potential for confusion with the audio filter highlights a more general interface issue which is that you're never able to see more than a few of the controls at one time. In order to maximise space for the three spectrum displays, the operational controls have been split up into seven separate tabs labelled Tuning, Audio, Memory, Notch, Squelch, Gain and Noise Blanker. This can be frustrating as you have to click on a different tab each time you want to move from, say, Tuning to AGC or from Audio to Memory. It's also the reason why you may not notice if you've left something like the audio filter, the AGC or the noise blanker set in an inappropriate way, as you can't see the setting when you're in a different tab. I'd happily give up some space elsewhere in order to get more controls on screen. What is good is that almost everything can also be controlled by the use of customisable keyboard shortcuts so, if you can remember the keys, you may not need to switch tabs so often.

Tuning comes with many options. Rotating the mouse wheel tunes in 1kHz steps which become 1, 10 or 100Hz if you hold down the Ctrl, Shift or Alt keys respectively. To go straight to a particular frequency, you can enter it from the keyboard or click on it in any of the three spectrum displays, though this usually results in just an approximate value determined by the resolution of the display. It would be nice if it could be set to snap to the nearest whole kHz. Up/down tuning in fixed steps of 5, 9 or 10kHz is available via on-screen buttons and keyboard commands. There's also a virtual tuning knob on the screen that you can rotate by pressing the left or right mouse buttons over it. Finally, you can change individual digits by pressing the shift key while scrolling the mouse wheel over that digit. If you'd rather use a hardware tuning knob, Excalibur works well with the Griffin PowerMate.



The benefit of this type of display is that you can see exactly where the signals are and adjust filtering to suit. Here, the broader band shows the main selectivity filter set to receive on 1010kHz, the lighter band within it shows where the notch filter has been placed to remove an interfering signal on 1008kHz.

There's an excellent notch filter that can be positioned by hand on the demodulator spectrum display and can be adjusted for width from 10Hz to 2kHz. It's very effective. Some people may want an auto-notch, but for me a manual one is preferable. AGC can be set to Fast, Medium or Slow and you can also define up to three custom settings. Alternatively, you can switch the AGC off and set the gain manually, which is often better for weak signals. AGC is based on levels within the demodulator passband. Given Excalibur's superb filters this means that you can get very close to a much stronger station without having it affect the gain. There's no Noise Reduction filter, but there is a Noise Blanker. I haven't used it much as I don't generally suffer from the sort of impulsive noise that blankers are designed to tackle, but on the one occasion when it did occur the blanker dealt with it effectively.

As I've already mentioned, Excalibur can record the whole DDC bandwidth up to 2MHz for offline DXing later and can also record up to three audio channels. Long recordings can be split automatically into files of about 2GB so you can leave the recorder running all night if your hard disk has enough space. At the maximum 2MHz bandwidth, a DDC recording uses about 36GB per hour. At 1.25MHz, which is the smallest bandwidth to cover all of MW, it needs 24GB per hour. At narrower bandwidths, Excalibur uses more storage than Perseus because it records 32-bits of data rather than 24. However, above a DDC bandwidth of 1MHz both drop down to 16 bits so disk usage is comparable. The price of 1 and 2TB hard disks has fallen so much that it's entirely reasonable to make complete overnight wideband recordings of MW. Though, you wouldn't want to keep too many of them.

During playback all the split files join seamlessly and you can pause and move forwards or backwards within each file. If your DDC recording has caught something that you want to keep as an audio recording, you can record the audio directly from the DDC playback. Having both wideband and audio recording fully integrated into the receiver is a delight and vastly better than messing about with separate recording software and audio cables (actual or virtual). It all works well and is

immensely useful. What stops it being perfect is that there is no timestamping on the recordings, so finding TOTH IDs or simply logging what you've heard isn't easy, though it can be done by noting down the start time of the first recording and then doing some calculations. Also, there's no ability to endlessly loop a short section during playback in the way that Perseus does. Instead you have to drag the marker manually back along the timeline every time. It would be very nice if both these points could be addressed in a future software update.

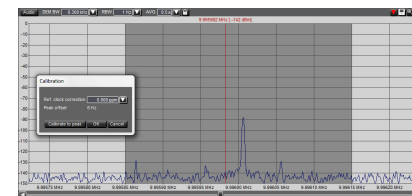
There's a powerful scheduler for audio recordings that lets you set different tuning, mode, gain, etc. for each event. Sadly, you can't schedule DDC recordings, which is odd as there's more need for this than for timed single-channel recordings. However, following recommendations from other users, I've been using a free utility called Splinterware System Scheduler to stop and start the DDC recorder at specified times. It works very well, making it easy to create repeated short TOTH recordings or indeed any other scheduled DDC recordings. Of course, it would be even better to have an integrated DDC scheduler to match the excellent one for audio, but at least this plugs the gap.

Incidentally, the ease of using a program like Splinterware reflects an important difference between Excalibur and Perseus. Because of its almost total lack of keyboard commands, Perseus can only be controlled from generic third-party software by simulating mouse-clicks at specific positions on screen. Excalibur, by contrast, has comprehensive and easily customised keyboard shortcuts which makes it easier to provide remote control or scheduling via external software and also ensures that such arrangements will continue to work if the window is moved or resized.

Excalibur has an unlimited number of memories for storing frequencies and receiver settings. You can also assign up to 11 memories to the keyboard's function keys, which is very handy for quick access to any station or frequency of particular interest. As you tune around, any memory entries associated with the current frequency (\pm an adjustable margin) will appear in the Memory tab, though this is a cramped little space and, anyway you may not be able to see it as you'll probably need one of the other tabs to be active. You can also open a separate window to show the memory database and tune straight to any entry by double-clicking on it. Memories can be added individually or imported in bulk as a .csv file from just about any spreadsheet or database program.

Being so new, Excalibur inevitably has a few bugs and wrinkles which still need to be sorted out. Fortunately, Winradio has always been very responsive to user feedback and has an impressive track record of issuing frequent software updates. One bug that I reported to them (it affected the operation of the notch filter in certain modes) was diagnosed, re-programmed and released as a software update in one month. A minor incompatibility with some sound cards was also fixed within weeks of being reported by users. There aren't many manufacturers that could manage that. Among the outstanding issues are some inconsistent readings on the S-meter, such as RMS values usually being higher than Peak values. Another one to watch out for is that when you're making a DDC recording you must make sure that the button labelled Insert Frequency is selected. At first sight, this button simply seems to give you the option of putting the centre frequency into the file name. In fact it's not an option, it's essential, because if you don't select it then the DDC recording won't work when you play it back. (No, it doesn't make sense to me either). As far as stability goes, I've found the software to be very reliable. It's never crashed on me or caused anything else to misbehave.

Excalibur's capabilities can be expanded by the use of software plug-ins. There aren't currently any designed specifically for it, but that may change once it becomes established. Meanwhile, Winradio offers several software options including VSC, which can route audio to other applications, Wavebase, which provides facilities for controlling Excalibur from a database of frequencies and stations, and the Advanced Digital Suite, which decodes various digital modes such as Navtex and Fax. Because audio recording is built in, there's no further need for Total Recorder and similar software. However, you may want to keep an audio editor for cutting down recordings or providing more complex audio filtering. Excalibur's audio recordings are in WAV format so they don't suffer the limitations of MP3. Of course, they can be converted in an audio editor if you want a compressed format for archiving.



Frequency calibration is very simple and can be done at any accurately known frequency.

As I'm concentrating on Excalibur's use for MW DXing, I've ignored various features that aren't directly applicable. So I'll just quickly mention that the frequency display can be offset for use with VHF/UHF downconverters. Excalibur also has three types of squelch and an FM mode, but not wide FM as needed for broadcast reception.

That more or less covers the main operational features of Excalibur. What about its signal handling? MW DXing makes great demands on any receiver. In particular, it requires the ability to receive weak signals close to very strong ones. Fortunately, this is precisely where Excalibur excels. The sharpness and depth of its filters is excellent and its handling of strong signals is superb. Unlike an analogue receiver, which will degrade gradually as it's presented with ever stronger input signals, a digital receiver suffers little degradation until the input saturates and clipping occurs, at which point reception falls apart. To prevent this happening, Excalibur has a switched attenuator that can be adjusted in 3dB steps from 0 to -21dB. There's also a very useful Auto option that will increase the attenuation automatically if signal overload approaches. This is ideal if you leave Excalibur making a DDC recording and then a local powerhouse comes on air in the middle of it. There's no switched preamplifier, nor is one likely to be needed on MW except perhaps in very quiet locations. There's also no preselector other than a switched high-pass filter to protect SW reception from powerful MW broadcasts. Again, that will be fine in the vast majority of cases, but may be a limitation for MW use if you live close to a SW transmitter.

The sort of intermodulation problems that can affect analog radios are almost non-existent in digital receivers except insofar as they're caused by analog circuitry in the front end. However, SDRs can suffer from various spurious signals that are produced in the digital processing. Excalibur is remarkably free from these apart from one type that appears only when using the three widest DDC bandwidths. I first noticed this when applying a clean signal from a crystal oscillator. At lower DDC bandwidths, it was a textbook response, but at the three highest ones, a cluster of spurs appeared alongside the oscillator signal. They were at low level, but clearly audible. I was puzzled at how I could have missed these before, but going back to real-world listening I found no trace of them. It was only when listening to broadcast stations around 21.6MHz in the 13m band, where incoming noise is much lower, that the spurs sometimes appeared. I suppose that in a remote and quiet location they might become evident even on MW, but I doubt it. If they do ever cause trouble, Excalibur allows you to apply dithering. This is a technique for reducing internally-generated spurious signals by smearing them out across a range of frequencies. This inevitably raises the noise floor a bit, but it completely eliminates these spurs. Overall, Excalibur has really excellent RF performance with exactly the quality you need for MW DXing - good dynamic range even where weak and strong signals are crowded together.

When listening on MW TA split frequencies in Excalibur, I've found that both Sync AM and the two SSB modes, give excellent results. I rarely use Normal AM mode because the filtering isn't sharp-edged enough for DXing, though you can use the audio filter to improve it. As with any receiver it takes a while to get the feel for which modes work best in which circumstances. MW DXing is unusual in this respect because it's one of the few areas where the "correct" mode (in this case AM) is not normally the best one to use. In all modes, you can perform minor retuning by dragging the passband using the left mouse button or you can use the right button, which moves the passband but leaves the local oscillator tuning unchanged. These techniques, together with use of the audio filter, notch and AGC, make up a powerful toolkit for extracting the most out of weak signals. If you're used to operating an old-style analog receiver, any SDR of this type will present a steep learning curve at first, but you'll be well rewarded for the effort.

Having spent some time running Excalibur alongside Perseus on MW, with both receivers fed from the same antenna via a splitter, I found that anything I could hear on one I could hear on the other. They do sound different and sometimes one or the other gave slightly better audio recovery, but there was no consistent bias favouring either one. If you're undecided between them, I suggest you base your choice primarily on the interface and the additional features, and don't worry about core performance. In this respect, both receivers are pretty much at the peak of what's available now.

So, we come to the bottom line. Is Excalibur a suitable receiver for serious MW DXing? Yes, definitely. Its RF performance is superb, its filters are excellent, the displays are clear and useful, and there are enough options and adjustments to ensure that you can get the best out of any signal. This is a first-rate radio for MW DX. Is it a Perseus killer? No. It's a very formidable rival - ahead of Perseus in some respects, behind it in others - but it isn't a next-generation receiver that makes Perseus obsolete. Both use the same underlying approach and each has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Performance isn't really an issue now, but I don't believe that any SDR manufacturer has yet delivered the last word in usability and ergonomics. Modern receivers like this process vast amounts of information and have the scope to do so much with it that they demand new approaches in terms of control and display. Excalibur brings some new thinking to this and, very importantly, brings competition to what was essentially a one-horse race before. I hope that this will lead to even better radios for all of us. In the meantime, what we have in Excalibur is an exceptionally talented new receiver with a flair for MW DX. It's certainly one of the best receivers that I've ever used. It's sensibly priced and very well supported, and it deserves to attract many users.

In the USA, Excalibur is available from Grove Enterprises and Aventas for under \$900. To put that in context, Perseus is on special right now at Grove for \$1200 while top analog receivers such as the JRC NRD545 were selling not so long ago for \$1800. As well as the receiver itself, you get a linear power supply, a USB cable, a substantial printed manual and a disc containing the software. Software installation is very simple and unlimited free updates can be downloaded from www.winradio.co.uk. That's also the place to find more information and a full technical specification. If you want to get a feel for Excalibur before you buy, you can download the software and use it in Demo mode without needing to have the hardware. Obviously, you won't be able to receive anything, but it's a useful introduction to this radio.

(This review originally appeared in Medium Wave News and is used with permission of the author and Medium Wave Circle)

2010-2011 IRCA Magic Seven DX CONTEST

Manager: Nancy Johnson – 265 Waterton Way – Billings MT 59102-7755
E-mail: NancyJohnson@prodigy.net

December 15, 2010 update

1. Garry Stoklas 29
2. Tim Noonan 21
3. Nancy Johnson* 9
4. Richard Bradley 8

*Contest manager is not eligible to win.

Please remember to report any special loggings you hear while DX'ing for the contest to the appropriate editor! The contest runs until May 31, 2011 so there is plenty of time to enter. The contest rules appear in the Sept. 11, 2010 DXM.

***** JUST RELEASED *****
***** IRCA Mexican Log, 15th Edition (Winter 2010) *****

The **IRCA MEXICAN LOG** lists all AM stations in Mexico by frequency, including call letters, state, city, day/night power, slogans, schedule in UTC/GMT, formats, networks and notes. The call letter index gives call, frequency, city and state. The city index (listed by state, then city) includes frequency, call and day/night power. The transmitter site index (listed by state, then city) tabulates the latitude and longitude of transmitter sites. This is an indispensable reference for anyone who hears Mexican radio stations. Size is 8 1/2" x 11".

Prices: IRCA/NRC members - \$9.50 (US/Canada/sea mail), \$11.50 (México), \$12.50 (rest of the world). Non-IRCA/NRC members - add \$2.00.

To order from the IRCA Bookstore, send the correct amount to: IRCA BOOKSTORE, 9705 MARY NW, SEATTLE WA 98117-2334 (PayPal [add \$1.00] email: phil_tekno@yahoo.com). Please state club affiliation when ordering.

Pacific Asian Log

Latest versions of the PAL Radio Guides covering all AM [mediumwave] and SW [shortwave] radio stations across the region are available from the Radio Heritage Foundation website www.radioheritage.net.

The Pacific Asian Log [PAL] Radio guides list all known AM and SW radio stations operating in the region with detailed information about operating times, languages, location, and much more...across many thousands of individual stations.

Information in the new Pacific Asian Log Radio Guides is also useful for travellers, travel agents, corporates and others who need to keep clients and staff informed.

The PAL Radio Guides are compiled in Seattle [USA] by our editor-in-chief Bruce Portzer from monitoring reports, official sources and feedback from listeners across the region.

Search the two guides online now by options such as location and frequency or download copies for your own personal use from www.radioheritage.net.

You can also search our other frequently updated online guides to Australian narrowcast AM radio [Australia 1611-1701 AM] and the New Zealand Low Power FM Radio dial [NZLPFM Radio]

Feedback, corrections and updates from users are always welcome and will be incorporated in future versions. Simply email us with your comments to info@radioheritage.net.

An Introduction to Broadcast Band DXing

This tri-folded brochure is ideal for explaining the Broadcast Band DXing hobby and the IRCA. It can be included with reception reports and given to other interested folks. Sub topics include: What is DXing?, Broadcasting's early years, The first DXers, Clubs helped listeners share, Our hobby today and DX clubs still unite listeners. It is two color printed on heavy stock. Price is \$0.35/brochure (US and Canada), \$1.00 (rest of the world). Minimum order is 10.

Sunrise/Sunset Maps

12 maps showing 15 minute sunset and sunrise times for the US and 12 maps showing hourly sunset and sunrise times for the World. Explanation includes use of the maps and examples of DX made possible by knowledge of SR/SS times.

Prices: **IRCA members** – \$2.25 (US/Canada/Mexico/sea mail), \$3.00 (rest of the Americas/Europe airmail), \$4.00 (Australia/New Zealand airmail). Non-IRCA members – add \$1.00.

IRCA Slogans List (Winter 2008)

This completely revised Slogans List includes radio slogans from the US, Canada and Mexico (over 4000).

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PUBLICATION SCHEDULE FOR THE REMAINDER OF VOLUME 48

Issue #		Deadline	Masthead	Event
1524	V48 #16 DXM	12/27/10	01/01/11	Double Issue #1
1525	V48 #17 DXM	01/03/11	01/08/11	
1526	V48 #18 DXM	01/10/11	01/15/11	
1527	V48 #19 DXM	01/17/11	01/22/11	
1528	V48 #20 DXM	01/24/11	01/29/11	
1529	V48 #21 DXM	01/31/11	02/05/11	
1530	V48 #22 DXM	02/07/11	02/12/11	Last Weekly
1531	V48 #23 DXM	02/21/11	02/26/11	First Bi-Weekly (Fortnightly)
1532	V48 #24 DXM	03/07/11	03/12/11	Anniversary Issue
1533	V48 #25 DXM	03/21/11	03/26/11	IRCA Elections
1534	V48 #26 DXM	04/04/11	04/09/11	Last Bi-Weekly (Fortnightly)
1535	V48 #27s SDXM	04/18/11	04/23/11	
1536	V48 #27 DXM	05/02/11	05/07/11	Double Issue #2
1537	V48 #28s SDXM	05/16/11	05/21/11	
1538	V48 #28 DXM	05/30/11	06/04/11	Double Issue #3
1539	V48 #29s SDXM	06/13/11	06/18/11	
1540	V48 #29 DXM	06/27/11	07/02/11	Double Issue #4
1541	V48 #30s SDXM	07/11/11	07/16/11	
1542	V48 #30 DXM	07/25/11	07/30/11	Double Issue #5-End of V48

The IRCA is a non-profit organization devoted to the hobby of hearing distant stations on the Broadcast Band (510-1720 kHz). **DX Monitor**, the official publication of the IRCA, is published in "soft" form 35 times a year (weekly from November through March, twice monthly from April to November) and in printed form 30 times a year (weekly November through March, monthly April to November). **DX Monitor** contains members' loggings, articles on radio stations, receiver reviews, technical articles, DX tips, and other material of interest to Broadcast Band DX hobbyists.



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