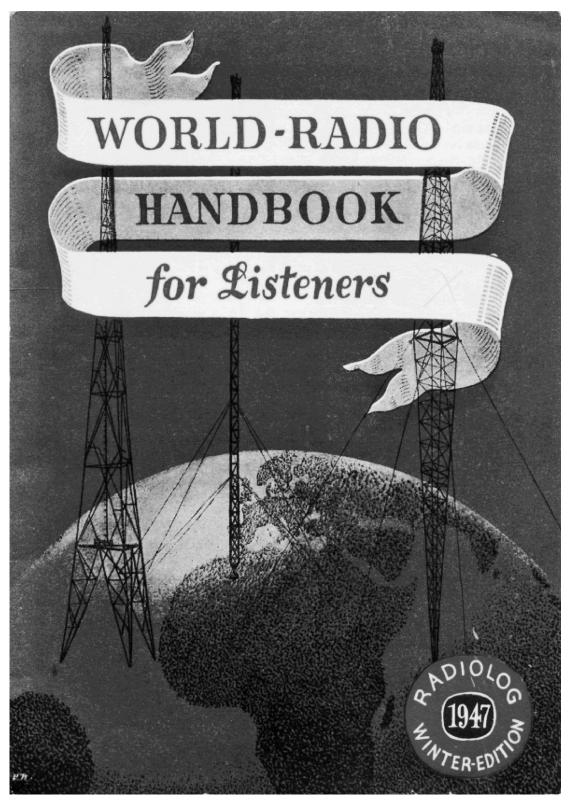
on the Short Waves, 1945 to TODAY

JEROME S. BERG

WORLD RADIO TV HANDBOOK (1947 TO THE PRESENT)

The need for a comprehensive source of information about shortwave broadcasting stations was finally met in November 1947 when the inaugural edition of the *World Radio Handbook* appeared.²⁶ The *Handbook* came to be known popularly as the "*WRH*," "*WRTH*" after it changed its name to the *World Radio Television Handbook* in 1961 (although it had included coverage of television since 1954). (It is usually referred to below as the *WRTH*.) It was edited and published by Danish radio enthusiast O. Lund Johansen, who had been writing, editing and publishing in the broadcasting field since 1923.²⁷

In the years since 1947 the *WRTH* has grown from 97 pages to almost 700, mainly due to the expansion of AM and FM listings, and while the level of detail has steadily increased, the basic structure has remained largely unchanged. In the first edition, information for each continent was arranged by country.²⁸ Within each country listing were shown the local



It was the *World Radio Handbook* that first made comprehensive data on shortwave broadcasting available in one place. The annual has been published continuously since 1947.

time, followed by information on each station in varying levels of detail: name and address; names of station officials; schedule information, including times, frequencies, power, languages and programs; ID texts and descriptions of interval signals where available (interval signal melodies often were shown on musical scales); and occasionally a "message to listeners" from the station (usually about reception reports).

In the back of the book were two lists of stations by frequency and wavelength, one for longwave and medium wave stations in Europe, North Africa and the Near East, the other, "Short-Wave Stations of the World," covering the shortwave bands worldwide. The first edition also contained summary information on various broadcasting organizations, endorsements from broadcasting officials, continental maps, a primer on shortwave listening, photos of stations and personalities, and advertising. In the latter department the *WRTH* came of age quickly, for by the third edition the back cover was occupied by a full-page ad from Hallicrafters for its SX-62 receiver.

O. Lund Johansen explained the purpose of the *WRTH* in the foreword to the first edition:

The increasing importance and rapid growth of international broadcasting justifies the publication of a handbook which supplies practical information concerning the organisation and activities of the different broadcasting corporations. Development has caused international broadcasting to become so complicated and extensive that a World Radio Handbook must be of importance to both listeners and broadcasting companies. Its aim will be to give those interested practical information and instruction regarding what is going on in the ether at all hours of the day and night, and to provide the broadcasting corporations with such particulars of each others activities that the contents of the book will serve to promote the development of international broadcasting.

In 1959, while on a trip to the United States, Johansen talked more about the WRTH with a New York Times reporter.

"All things were disturbed [in 1947] ... I thought we could use broadcasting to collect the world again, to give all exact information that would help people get programs." This is done by sending out at least 15,000 pieces of mail to stations, governments and broadcasting agencies each year. The letters ask the authorities for all possible details. The response is generally prompt from both sides of the Iron Curtain, from the young countries as well as the old. Questions are asked in major languages. For instance, a query in Russian to Mongolia (Outer) elicits such details as that Ulan Bator's Radio chairman of the board is Sodnomdarsja and that the station's announcer identifies it by saying "Ankhararai. Ulanbatras jarsj baina." This may not mean much outside of the yurt country, but the student of the handbook learns that it means "Attention. This is Ulan Bator calling."²⁹

The name and format of the *WRTH* may have been influenced by the BBC's *World-Radio*, and, to a lesser extent, by the British magazine *Short Wave News*. Titled *The Radio Supplement* at its inception in 1925 and renamed the following year, *World-Radio* was a weekly, newspaper-style publication covering the programs to be heard on foreign stations, mainly European medium wave stations that could be heard in England. Later it included some shortwave information as well, but the emphasis was always on medium wave. It was incorporated into *Radio Times* magazine in 1939. One of the early features of *World-Radio* was the front-page "Station Identification Panel," a bordered text containing information on a particular station — frequency and wavelength, power, interval signal, identification announcement, distance from London, etc. In the early 1930s, the BBC issued several editions of a booklet called *World-Radio Station Identification Panels* in which it republished updated versions of many of the *World-Radio* panels (and added some for a few U.S. medium

wave and shortwave stations). The British publication *Short Wave News*, which first appeared in January 1947, picked up the station panel idea and often carried a "Broadcast Station Country Panel" containing a list of the shortwave stations of a particular country, with frequency, power and broadcast times.

The major difference between the *WRTH* and other available information sources was that the *WRTH* was based principally on information received from broadcasters rather than on listener reports. Because the *WRTH* assembled in one place the information on all the broadcasters in a given country, the reader could better understand the overall broadcasting scene there. The full names and addresses of the stations also provided listeners with authoritative location information for individual stations. This was of particular value to those interested in places like Spain, Angola, China, and Latin America, where many small private stations were in operation, or Germany, Japan and Indonesia, where political events had led to a complex shortwave scene. The *WRTH* gave structure to corners of the broadcasting world that had never been fully charted.

The second edition of the *WRTH* appeared in May 1948, and the third in November 1948, reflecting an early intention to publish a summer edition and a winter edition each year. This plan proved too ambitious, however. The fourth edition was not published until October 1949, and thereafter the book was published annually toward the end of each calendar year. At least one German (1953) and Spanish (1960) edition are known to have been issued.³⁰ The *WRTH* continues to be published every year.³¹

In the U.S., people started learning about the *WRTH* in 1948. At the start it had to be purchased direct from the publisher in Denmark at a cost of 14 International Reply Coupons (which cost 9 cents each at the time). Soon it was available for \$1.25 from the *WRTH* U.S. agent, Ben E. Wilbur of East Orange, New Jersey (later Washington, D.C., and still later Livingston, New Jersey). It became available from Gilfer Associates in 1955. The book received rave reviews. Ken Boord called it comprehensive and highly accurate, and one of the best international radio guides he had ever seen. The list price of the *WRTH* increased over the years: \$2 in 1955, \$8.95 in 1975, \$19.50 in 1985, \$29.95 in 2005.

Much of the content that is now associated with the *WRTH* was added during the book's first ten years. These include lists of clubs, club representatives and correspondents, standard frequency and time stations, and a list of broadcasts in the international language, Esperanto (all in 1948); a world time table, and the population and number of listeners in each country (1949–50); verification information and stations' future plans (1950–51); a callsign allocation chart and propagation information (1952); FM and television stations (one page each) and late news and corrections (1953); a broadcast frequency allocation chart (1954); brief information on language lessons by radio, a list of receivers by country, and a list of advertisers (1955); and the principal language(s) spoken in each country, and a DX program list (1957).

Medium wave information for areas outside Europe, North Africa and the Near East did not start appearing in the *WRTH* until 1950–51 when the editor felt able to reliably verify their operations. The list of longwave and medium wave stations was expanded to include the world beyond Europe, North Africa and the Near East beginning with the 1967 *WRTH Summer Supplement*.

To keep readers current on summer broadcasting schedule changes that were adopted by many stations, from 1959 to 1971 the *WRTH* published the *WRTH Summer Supplement*



BULLETIN

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LATIN AMERICAN REPORT by Richard E Wood, U.S.A.

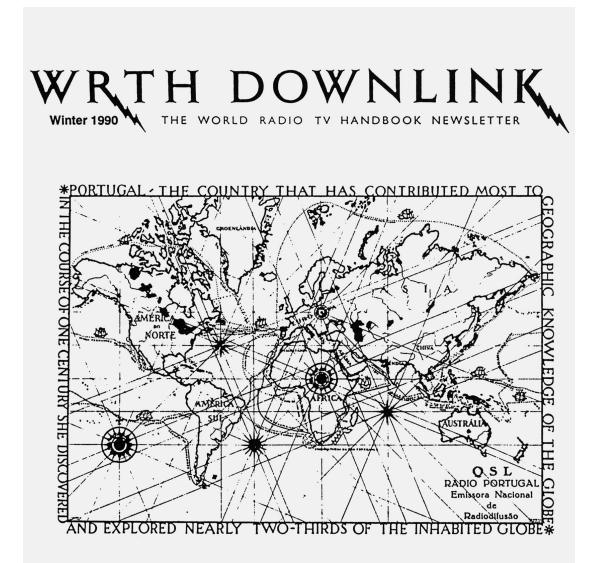
ARGENTINA. Radio Nacional, Mendoza, 6180 kHz, noted with news 1030, local identification and music 1045. Numerous local identi fications, and all own programming, not parallel Radio Nacional, Buenos Aires, then heard on 6060 kHz. Remarkable strength. Do not confuse Radio Nacional, Colombia, at present inactive. WRTVH listed sign-on time of 1600 is wrong.

BOLIVIA. Radio Progreso, La Paz, noted on 6005 kHz with solid signals 0900-1100. All in Aymara with rare Spanish words. Emisoras Pio XII, Siglo Veinte, recommends mailing address Casilla 434, Oruro. Admits frequency drift from nominal 5955 kHz to current 5961.5 kHz. Noted daily 0000-0300 and 0930-1100. Comments that numerous reception reports have been received from Sweden.

CHILE. Acc. to a news item first heard over Radio Victoria, Lima, Peru, 6020 kHz, Radio Presidente Balmaceda, Santiago, 1300, 5975 and 9590 kHz, was closed by the Chilean government because of alleged excessive reporting of unrest and strong government activity at the time of the assassination of former Inetrior Minister Pérez Suchovic. It is, suggested that DX'ers obtain verifications from all

Above and following two pages: For those requiring the most current information, the World Radio Handbook offered a periodic supplement — first the World Radio Bulletin, and later the WRTH Newsletter and WRTH Downlink.





In this issue: Gulf Crisis Update Winter Schedules of the International Broadcasters Broadcasts in Esperanto Shortwave Table Updater for the Tropical Bands (called the *Summer Edition* from 1967 to 1971). For those who wanted even more current information, the *World Radio Handbook Bulletin* (later called the *World Radio Bulletin*) was published every two weeks from 1952 to 1976.³² In 1976 it became the thrice-yearly *WRTH Newsletter*, renamed *WRTH Downlink* in 1988 and published four times in 1988 and 1989, three in 1990 and 1991, the last year of its publication. The *WRTH Latin American Newsletter* was published until 1994. Edited by Tor-Henrik Ekblom, then of Finland, it was provided to DX clubs and *WRTH* monitors on a limited-circulation basis.³³

A by-time listing of broadcasts in English to various parts of the world was included from 1967 to 1998. (A by-country English-language broadcast list was included for one year only, in 1997.) Some other lists were tried for various periods, including a list of foreign service English news programs (1962 through 1974), a list of language lessons broadcast over the air (1967 and 1968), a by-language listing of stations that broadcast in the various languages of the world (1967 and 1968 summer supplements), and several FM lists (1967 summer supplement). In the May 2006 electronic supplement to the 2006 *WRTH*, by-time lists of international broadcasts in English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish were included, and these were continued in subsequent *WRTHs*. Save for some European off-shore medium wave pirates in the 1960s and 1970s and a few miscellaneous stations, the *WRTH* did not cover pirate broadcasting.

The maps and photographs improved over the years. A world time map was added in 1963. Advertising increased greatly. Station FAX numbers, e-mail addresses and URLs were shown as they came into general use. Responsibility for the annual prediction of shortwave conditions, begun in 1958 by BBC engineer T. W. Bennington and presented in 1963 by RFE's Radio Frequency and Propagation Manager, Stanley Leinwoll, was assumed by George Jacobs, Chief of the VOA's Frequency Division, in 1964, and continues as a regular *WRTH* feature.

Satellite broadcasts were covered during the years 1990 to 1995. (A separate *WRTH Satellite Broadcasting Guide* was published from 1994 to 1996.) To cater to program listeners, an unattributed article, "Listening Tips— Some Tips on Listening to International Radio Programs," was included in 1996. The following year this became a detailed table authored by John Figliozzi under the name "Program Tips— News & Current Affairs on Shortwave 1997." It did not appear in subsequent years, however.

Some items of information were dropped. The individual wavelength equivalents to the frequencies shown in the "Shortwave Stations of the World" list were replaced by a conversion table in 1974; and to the chagrin of many DXers, the musical scale depictions of interval signals were dropped in 1990. DXers were similarly unhappy in 1997 when the international shortwave broadcasters were placed in a separate section from their domestic counterparts, and in 2000 when the domestic part of the book was rearranged solely by country rather than by country within continents. The 1997 change was instructive: the international broadcast country listings occupied 50 pages, while the listings devoted to AM, FM, and the comparatively few domestic shortwave broadcasters, occupied 300.

The *WRTH* had included some articles during its first 20 years of publication. They dealt mainly with propagation, the international broadcasting industry, and the future of radio communications. In the latter part of the 1960s some DX-related articles began appearing. In 1976, following the demise of the separate publication, *How to Listen to the World*, a new features section, "Listen to the World," was added. It appeared (not always under

that name) through 1995, although feature articles continued to be a staple in the *WRTH* thereafter. *Listen to the World* contained articles on stations, equipment, propagation, clandestine broadcasting, etc. A popular "Listen to the World" feature were the receiver reviews by Larry Magne which appeared in 1978 and then annually from 1980 to 1986. (Magne created *Radio Database International*, later *Passport to World Band Radio*, in 1984.) Receiver reviews continue to be published in the *WRTH* each year. From 1987 through 1997 they were usually attributed to one or more of Jonathan Marks, Willem Bos, and Thomas R. Sundstrom, and thereafter to *WRTH* Technical Editor John Nelson.

The "Listen to the World" section also contained the announcement of the *WRTH* annual Industry Awards which were made from 1989 to 1998, and which acknowledged industry excellence, mainly in receivers and software.

O. Lund Johansen had been assisted in his editorial duties by journalist Jens M. Frost since 1949. Frost assumed the *WRTH* editorship in 1964 when Johansen retired.³⁴ From 1978 he was assisted by Andrew G. Sennitt, who had come to the *WRTH* from the BBC Monitoring Service. Although the *WRTH* was bought by Billboard Publications, Inc., around 1967, it continued to operate autonomously, with Frost remaining the publication's face to the shortwave world.

Circulation when Frost took over, 18,000, would more than double by 1977 and grow to 66,000 in 1981.³⁵ Although more people were reading the *WRTH* in the 1980s—in 1982 it credited a "50 percent increase in readership over the past three years" to a new short-wave market resulting from a "new generation" of shortwave receivers³⁶— the process of assembling the book was becoming more difficult, with greater reliance being placed on DXers, who served as contributing editors and assumed responsibility for preparing various parts of the book, and as much reliance on monitoring as on official sources. Frost and Sennitt described the situation in 1984 thus:

When the WRTH was first conceived in the late 1940s, broadcasters were wildly enthusiastic about it, and it was considered essential to supply the Editor with accurate information about their operations. Precise details of powers and frequencies were willingly supplied, even though such details were not always easy to verify with the equipment then available. ¶In 1984, things have changed. Many of the broadcasters, even the big ones, have long since stopped making the effort to assist us—some can not even be bothered to send printed information which is available in any case! So, we are dependent to an increasing extent on the collaborators and monitors who send us the "missing" information. Even some of the official details in this edition came to us indirectly via a collaborator.³⁷

Sennitt became *WRTH* editor upon Frost's retirement in 1987, the same year that editorial offices moved from Denmark to the Billboard building in Amsterdam and the preparation of the *WRTH* entered the computer age. (Frost died on October 18, 1999.³⁸) By this time the readership of the *WRTH* was changing. In 1989 Sennitt observed:

The WRTH owes much of its success to DXers. They are still around, and still making a major contribution to the Handbook through their dedication to accuracy and their constant pursuit of new information. ¶But now we also have another category of reader, whose needs and interests are quite distinct from those of the DXer. This listener is more interested in the message than the medium. He or she may be using a state-of-the-art digital receiver, but is quite happy to listen to news and information in his or her native language. This is certainly not DXing, but is much more akin to the normal everyday process of tuning in to one's local station. The broad-casters are delighted, and have been motivated to serve these listeners more efficiently. Hence the sudden rush of agreements to use transmission facilities of other stations closer to the target audience.³⁹

In 1991 he said:

International broadcasting has entered a new era. In many cases where shortwave used to be the only viable medium, signals of domestic audio quality can now reach the listener through satellite distribution. More and more countries are taking these services and rebroadcasting them locally on mediumwave or FM. ¶Some of those for whom shortwave radio has been a way of life are finding it hard to accept the new reality. Operations which in former times would have used shortwave as a matter of course — such as AFRTS broadcasts to American Forces on active service — no longer use it on a regular basis.⁴⁰

World Radio TV Handbook circulation in 1991, a year in which the Gulf War led to heightened interest in shortwave, is said to have been some 73,000 copies.⁴¹ The *WRTH* continued to grow in size over the years. The decrease in the number of shortwave stations was more than offset by AM and FM stations and the increasing number of international shortwave relay arrangements. There was much information to report. The *WRTH's* coverage of television was expanded as that medium grew throughout the world. The level of detail for each country's listings increased, and the book benefited from more use of color and graphics, and a generally more professional appearance. All of these changes notwith-standing, however, a 1947 user would still be at home with today's *WRTH*.

A major change in the *WRTH* occurred in 1998 when Billboard sold the publication to WRTH Publications Ltd., a U.K. company set up specifically to edit and publish the *WRTH*. (Billboard remained a co-edition partner.) The editorial baton was passed to David Bobbett, a ham operator and British telecommunications journalist who relocated *WRTH* headquarters to Milton Keynes, England. Nicholas Hardyman handled the business side. The transition was somewhat rocky, for while the *WRTH* continued to appear on schedule, regular users quickly spotted deficiencies in the new team's first (1999) edition — omissions and errors of various kinds, misspellings, etc. Bobbett acknowledged the problems and set about to make them right, largely avoiding what could have been a major drop in the *WRTH's* main stock in trade — its credibility. In terms of content, the by-time table of broadcasts in English from international stations returned in 2000 after a one-year hiatus, now including German and Spanish and extended to French in 2001 and Portuguese in 2003. Of greater interest to DXers, the *WRTH* began including information on clandestine broadcasts.

Editorial responsibilities changed again in 2003 when Bobbett was succeeded by *WRTH* Assistant Editor Sean Gilbert and Hardyman became more involved in the editing of the book. Hardyman took on much of the national section and Gilbert handled the international section and worked with contributing editors.⁴² A major advancement that year was the availability of free periodic updates to the *WRTH* in the form of downloadable .pdf files. This was a first for the *WRTH*, and a development which DXers welcomed, periodic updates to the *WRTH* not having been available since 1991. Three *WRTH* .pdf updates were made available in 2007, one being 110 pages long. A table of DRM broadcasts was added in 2005, and in 2006 the "WRTH Monitor" was begun wherein *WRTH* posted individual shortwave news update items on their website.

The appearance of the *WRTH* changed shortwave listening in a fundamental way. For the first time, a listener could obtain basic station schedules and other shortwave tuning information easily, without the need to join clubs, follow magazine columns, etc. At the same time, the *WRTH* facilitated growth in the number of people who would move from casual listening to DXing. Although the *WRTH*'s present annual circulation of some 30,000

reflects the decline in shortwave listening over the years, even now no dedicated listener would be without a current copy. $^{43}\,$

26. The reference by O. Lund Johansen to "this first edition" in the 1947 volume would seem to be conclusive as to whether that edition was the first. However, in 1982, and again in 1984, Jens M. Frost, having been editor of the WRTH since 1964, stated that the first edition of the WRTH was published in 1946, had 80 pages, and featured "big typesetting" and was "very easy to read." "The Shortwave Center Interview: Jens M. Frost and Andrew G. Sennitt," FRENDX, April 1982; speech by Jens Frost at the EDXC Conference, Stockholm, Sweden, June 9, 1984. None of those descriptors fit the 1947 edition. However, comments by Frost in 1967 to the effect that the first WRTH was published in 1947 suggest that his 1982 and 1984 remarks most likely were the result of faulty memory. Short Wave News, February 1967, p. 16. In any event, there is no evidence in Danish libraries of a pre-1947 publication meeting the Frost description. Erik Køie, "The Danish Short-Wave Club 60 Years," Short Wave News, August-September 2006, p. 25. (A 1945 Johansen publication, Kørtbolge-Haandbog - Vejledning for Kortbølgelyterre [Shortwave-Handbook – Guide to Short Wave Listening], some of whose parts the WRTH clearly resembled, had 40 pages and small type.)

27. A description of Johansen's early radio-related publishing is contained in Køie, *supra* note 26 at p. 25; see also Richard F. Shepard, "Expert On Short-Wave," *The New York Times*, May 31, 1959, Sec. 2, p. X-9, and Hank Bennett, "Meet O. Lund Johansen," *Popular Electronics*, March 1964, p. 81. For a history of the *WRTH* through 1995, see Andy Sennitt, "The Way It Was—A Brief History of the WRTH," *1996 WRTH*, p. 14. For an interesting analysis and comparison of the contents of the 1948, 1956, 1966 and 1976 editions of the *WRTH*, see "Is There Still Life at Forty," *1986 WRTH*, p. 571.

28. Some of the country listings of the first edition are interesting from an historical viewpoint. Radio Brazzaville was listed under French Equatorial Africa. Ghana was shown as the Gold Coast Colony. Indonesia was "East India (Dutch)" and was subdivided into Java, Celebes, Sumatra and Borneo. Thailand was called Siam, and Newfoundland was shown as a separate country.

29. Shepard, supra note 27.

30. Although there are occasional references to one or more Danish-language editions, their existence is open to question. Some of the early English editions did have a Danish-language cover and some Danish-language pages.

31. The publishing structure of the WRTH is complex. The earliest issues were published by O. Lund Johansen under his own name. The World Publications imprint (sometimes called World Radio Publications or World Radio-TV Publications) appeared in 1958, with World Publications serving as the parent of the WRTH, the Summer Supplement, the World Radio Handbook Newsletter, and several technical handbooks. In 1964, O. Lund Johansen retired. The structure divided, and the World Radio-TV Handbook Co., Ltd., was established. It produced the WRTH and the Summer Supplement, while World Publications handled the World Radio Bulletin, How to Listen to the World, and other publications. (World Publications issued News from Around the World in 1963-67 and World Medium-Wave Guide in 1964-68. Neither publication attracted much attention in North America.) In 1968, the World Radio-TV Handbook Co., Ltd., bought How to Listen to the World from World Publications and began publishing it under the World Radio-TV Handbook Co., Ltd., imprint, finally incorporating it into the WRTH proper in 1976. Save for a few latter years, the World Radio Bulletin was published by World Publications until 1976, when it came under the control of the WRTH which published it until 1991, first as the WRTH Newsletter, and then as WRTH *Downlink.* Soon after the sale of the *WRTH* to Billboard publications, Inc., circa 1967, printing of the *WRTH* was done in either the United Kingdom or the United States rather than Denmark.

32. From January 1973 until around September 1974, the *World Radio Bulletin* was edited and published privately by David McGarva of Edinburgh, Scotland. McGarva was succeeded by Richard Ginbey of Vanderbijlpark, South Africa.

33. The difficulties in collecting information on the Latin American broadcasting scene are recounted in Torre Ekblom, "Let's Face It," *FRENDX*, December 1972, p. SWC-7 [reprinted from the Finnish *DXclusive*]. Almost 100 persons helped Ekblom with the Latin American information over the years. See Tor-Henrik Ekblom, "World Radio TV Handbook 50 Years Anniversary and Latin America," *Short Wave News*, May 1997, p. 25.

34. For more on Frost, see Anker Petersen, "A Mighty Kauri Has Fallen in the Forest — Jens Frost, 1919–1999," *Short Wave News*, November 1999, p. 22. O. Lund Johansen died in 1975.

35. Speech by Gustav-Georg Thiele at the EDXC Conference, Deutsche Welle, Cologne, Germany, May 28–31, 1982. The number of copies "in print" for each year between 1976 and 1981, as shown on the *WRTH* front cover, is as follows: 1976, 40,000; 1977, over 40,000; 1978, over 43,000; 1979, over 55,000; 1980, over 55,000; 1981, over 60,000.

36. Jens M. Frost & Andrew G. Sennitt, "Message from the Editors," 1982 WRTH, p. 9.

37. Jens M. Frost & Andrew G. Sennitt, "Message from the Editors," 1984 WRTH, p. 11. For more on the compilation of the WRTH, see Andrew Sennitt, "Not in the WRTH," 1980 WRTH, p. 574; and "The WRTH-81 Story— Jens Frost Interviewed by Anker Petersen," Short Wave News, February 1981, p. 27. Local monitors were always needed to check some of the official data. "The big problem is Latin America. About 1,000 Latin American stations are written to each year via registered letter, but the result is similar to that of the listener who expects a QSL from that part of the world. Therefore, WRTH is compelled to organize regular monitors in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Haiti, etc." Short Wave News, February 1967, p. 16.

38. Andy Sennitt, "Jens Frost In Memorium," 2000 WRTH, p. 613.

39. Andrew G. Sennitt, "Message from the Editor," 1989 WRTH, p. 5.

40. Andrew G. Sennitt, "Message from the Editor," 1991 WRTH, p. 5.

41. Hermod Pedersen, "The Decline of the WRTH Empire," Nordic Shortwave Center website, www.nordicdx. com, 1998.

42. For a behind-the-scenes look at the production of the *WRTH* today, see "Diamond Anniversary — It's 60 Years of World Radio TV Handbook," *Monitoring Monthly* [U.K.], March 2006, p. 39.

43. The editions of the WRTH from 1947 to 1970 are now available on two CDs.