

# DX Recording for Verifications

• • • by F. WISEMAN

FOR some time, my principal hobby has been the recording of DX programs from stations in various parts of the world. As a means of spending money, this phase of DXing has few equals, and yet it has more than justified every penny I have invested.

While there may be questions about some verifications, who is to deny the recorded voice of an announcer giving the call (if any) and location of his station? Then, too, to be able to play back a record of some good catch is a most satisfying incident from every angle.

During the time I have played with DX recording, I have been able to transform signals from many far-distant stations into a permanent form. In my albums are records of programs from stations in every portion of the world.

About the most interesting record I have is that of a program from KVOO, Tulsa, Okla. The station notified me that they would send a message of greeting on December 30, 1933 during a local item. By great good luck, KVOO was coming in extraordinarily well and I was able to record their words of salutation without a miss. As far as I know, this is the first time a medium-wave schedule has been kept and recorded.

Usually, I send at least one record to the station heard as a form of report requesting verification. In most cases, the response is almost immediate. Often, the station plays the record on one of its local programs and, occasionally, there is a newspaper write-up about the event. I have quite a few clippings from different corners of the globe.

As a means of securing verifications, records have no equal. When

a station can hear a recording of part of their own program, perhaps recognizing an announcer's voice or a particular musical item, there is no question about issuing the confirmation.

Furthermore, one great advantage of recording is that it overcomes the language difficulty. While few of us may be able to understand an announcement in Spanish, Italian or German, the station will soon know whether they put on the program recorded.

While most stations make a great deal of a record of one of their programs, there are a few unfortunate exceptions. One New York station in particular got under my skin. I sent them an unusually fine recording of one of their programs and asked for a verification. Although they re-played the record as a special feature, they never verified my reception, much less acknowledged the record. It just happened that a fellow-townsmen of mine, then residing in New York, heard the broadcast of my record. He made a note of my name and address and wrote to me. That was over a year ago and, despite several reminders, I have yet to hear from the station.

In striking contrast, I sent a record of a speech by President Roosevelt to the White House and received a most cordial acknowledgement from the Secretary of State on behalf of the President.

Until I started recording, I had been able to verify only LR3, LR5 and LR6 of the South Americans. Last winter, I sent records to over a dozen Argentine stations and have recently received a verie from LR9, accompanied by a press clipping from Buenos Aires paper ULTIMA

HORA. By means of a constant stream of records, I have hopes of yet breaking down the unwillingness of the other Argentine stations to verify. Anyhow, you can never say that I haven't submitted definite proof of reception.

In addition to being a means of reporting for verification, these records are also of technical value to the stations conducting tests. I have recorded various stations on tests and have received replies that the records were of inestimable value to the engineers. Not so long ago, I sent W8XO a recording of nearly eighty minutes program. There was no need to record at such length, but they were asking for reports and I sent them a good one.

In addition to sending records away to stations, I sent a parcel of records chain-system to a number of I.D.A. members. Thus, they were able to hear stations which they probably have not been able to tune direct.

Some day, I hope to re-record one of my own records. Many stations have played by recordings and, if I should happen to be tuned to them on such an occasion, I would be able to record the playback. In this case, the signal would have crossed the Atlantic twice.

The nearest I ever came to this was recording a Christmas program from Germany which was being relayed by NBC. I don't know how it was sent to America from the German monastery, but the signal did cross the Atlantic twice before I got it recorded. This particular program was heard best from CHNS, Halifax, N. S., although it could be heard from various NBC stations.

As mentioned previously, the expense is usually terrific. The biggest item is the wastage of records. You may be tuned to some station perfectly, getting good volume and quality. Then, just as you start recording, the signal fades to zero and another record is ruined. I hate to

think of the pile of wasted disks I have around the house.

In order to identify the station being received, it is necessary to start recording just before the call is given. Of course, it is necessary to wait until the signal is good. Usually, I start the recording five seconds before the call and take my chances that the signal will hold up.

While chain programs are of no value to the average DXer, they are always best for my purposes. On independent stations, you never know when to expect a call and, when it comes, you usually aren't ready for it. However, chain calls always come at a regular interval and there isn't much difficulty in getting them. Besides, there can be no question about a call recorded on a chain program, even though the other DXers are forced to pass up such a station.

A verification can be obtained for as little as 30 seconds of program if you can get the call. Every DXer knows those weak signals which just won't come in loud enough for you to take down enough details for a decent report. In my case, I have only to wait until I hear a call, which is all that is necessary, for you can wait until the signal picks up and then record part of the program.

As no pre-grooved records are obtainable over here, I use a recording machine with a tracking device. As a matter of fact, this system is much more economical, since blank records can be made of commercial sheet aluminum. Just as long as the wife doesn't know how you use her best scissors, you are in for a lot of interesting DX.

In conclusion, I have found it necessary to warn all DXers against recording a station in the interval between calls. I have often found a station coming in fine at, say, 1:55 AM and started by record, only to have the signal fade out completely by 2:00 when the call should be heard.