

IBKA - Not every card in the CPRV collection is a QSL. Here is a card that a Connecticut ham sent to prospective monitors in 1922, inviting them to listen for his new 100 watt transmitter.



2ZA - Many QSLs are colorful and well designed. This 1939 broadcast band QSL is from 250-watt station 2ZA on New Zealand's north island.



3UZ - 3UZ, a 500-watt station in Melbourne, Australia, advised listeners that the station's parent, the engineering firm Oliver J. Nilson & Co. Pty. Ltd., would be happy to provide advice on radio and electrical problems.



Argentina - International shortwave broadcasting in Argentina was reorganized in 1950. The new government broadcaster was Servicio Internacional Radiofonica Argentina (SIRA), and it operated the most powerful shortwave broadcast transmitter in South America (LRA, 100 kw). It was a lucky DXer who found this "Diploma" in his mailbox.

The Committee to Preserve Radio Verifications

By Jerry Berg

It seemed like a long shot: Find and gather the QSLs of DXers who are no longer active or who had passed away, and preserve them for the future. How many QSL collectors, even if inactive, would be willing to part with their collections? What were the odds that the collections of deceased hobbyists had survived and could be located?

Such were the questions facing the Committee to Preserve Radio Verifications, a six-member group born in 1986 as a special project of the *Número Uno* DX newsletter and established soon thereafter as a committee of the Association of North American Radio Clubs (ANARC). The strategy would be simple enough: start contacting people and see what happens.

Old bulletins were examined, memories were searched, old friendships were tapped, and a list of known QSL collectors of yore was compiled. Then came extensive letter writing and telephoning – remember, this was before e-mail. Many people had moved; others had passed away during years of DX inactivity. New contact information was constantly being sought.

Happily, there were more than enough successes to make the CPRV viable. Soon we would learn some lessons that would serve us well in the future. One was that, when people give up DXing, and especially as they reach their senior years, the strong possessory interest in their QSLs gives way to an interest in having them preserved for the future. This is especially true in the typical case where no other family member is interested in radio. It also became clear that families often kept QSLs because they knew what they had meant to a deceased family member, but they did not know what to do with them.

These dynamics led to positive responses from many quarters, and soon collections large and small began arriving. They covered all modes of reception: shortwave broadcast, mediumwave (both domestic and foreign), utilities, even FM and TV. QSLs were sorted, indexed and organized for easy retrieval. Early on it became clear that the volume of amateur QSLs was beyond the committee's capabilities to handle, and so, except for ham QSLs of special importance, the focus would be on the broadcast and utility categories.

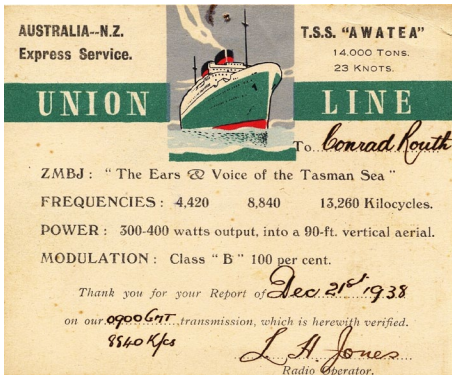
In the early years the committee's collection was kept at the facilities of the *Christian Science Monitor* in Boston. The *Monitor* had ambitious shortwave plans when it opened its first station in 1987, and providing a home for the CPRV collection was a way to strengthen contacts with listeners. As the collection grew, however, and as the *Monitor's* shortwave plans changed, it became clear that a new home would be needed.

So, in 1999 the collection was relocated to the Library of American Broadcasting (www.lib.umd.edu/LAB/) located in the Hornbake Library on the campus of the University of Maryland, College Park, near Washington, D.C. The LAB was founded in 1972 as the Broadcast Pioneers Library and is the sister library of the National Public Broadcasting Archives. The setting in which the QSLs now reside serves as a fitting memorial to their original owners and provides a professional, accessible research environment for those with a serious interest in the history of radio.

Over the years, the committee has remained active in seeking out collections of DXers who have passed away. Today the initiative is often taken by a DXer or his or her family who has learned of the committee through the internet (www.ontheshortwaves.com). The CPRV collection now includes QSLs from over 200 listeners. Among them are the verifications of such DX greats of the past as August Balbi, John Tweedie, Carroll Weyrich, Roger Legge, Paul Kary, and Al Niblack, as well as many well-known departed of more contemporary times, such as Andy Rugg, Al Sizer, John Sgrulletta, and John Bryant.

The strength of the collection is in the amalgamation of QSLs from many different people who listened during many different time frames. Often a station's QSLing can be traced over decades. Especially with regard to broadcast band stations, a QSL is sometimes the only remaining trace of a station no longer on the air.

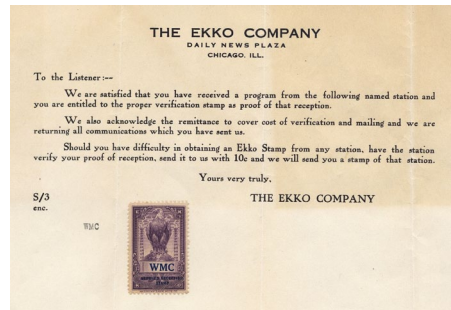
Since ANARC closed in 2005, the Committee has continued its operation as an independent project. Today the members of the CPRV are: Jerry Berg, chair; Gerry L. Dexter, Tom Gavaras, Dan Henderson, John C. Herkimer, and Don Jensen. The committee welcomes the opportunity to provide a new home for QSLs. Inquiries should be sent to jsberg@rcn.com.



Awatea - The New Zealand T.S.S. [Turbine Steam Ship] Awatea sailed between Australia and New Zealand and up the North American west coast in 1938. Though ZMBJ was mainly a communications station, it did some broadcasting as well.



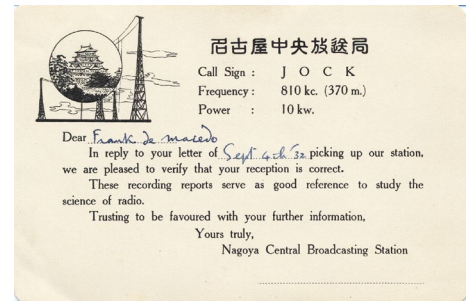
Beira - The small shortwave stations in the Portuguese colony of Mozambique were among the rarest of stations to hear. This one ran 300 watts. The QSL is from 1959.



EKKO - In the 1920s and 1930s, for 10 cents most stations would include an EKKO stamp with their QSL, and many listeners made a hobby of collecting the stamps. As this 1930 communication from the EKKO Company shows, for stations that did not use EKKO stamps you could send your QSL to the EKKO Company and they would send you the stamp.



Ethiopia - Could there be a more exotic-sounding place than Addis Ababa, Ethiopia? Radio Addis Ababa was the government telecommunications station. This QSL is from 1970.



JOCK - West Coast reception of mediumwave stations in Japan was fairly common among 1930s DXers, even with the relatively low power of the day. This 1932 QSL from JOCK in Nagoya confirms reception in Victoria, British Columbia.



JOFK - This 1932 mediumwave QSL from Hiroshima leaves no doubt as to the correctness of the listener's report: "We are very much pleased to hear that you have received our waves on the 4th Sept. and beg to verify with much interest that your receptions are all entirely correct."