



Looking Back

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Looking Back is a nostalgic reflection on the shortwave scene of yesteryears, written from the personal experience of the author, who has been DXing the shortwave bands for over seven decades.

New Year Cards

There was a time – notably in the fifties to eighties – when it was not uncommon to receive a card from Latin American broadcasters, wishing you a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

These cards, which were individually designed and printed for the station concerned, were often sent as a sort of QSL reply for a report you had sent. Some of them were in addition to a formal QSL sent earlier, but there were exceptions.

This is an interesting contrast to the frequent New Years cards sent by Communist countries such as Vietnam, China and North Korea, to name a few.



In the Latin world these older customs seem to have slowly given way to the more frequent Anglo-Saxon festivity of Christmas Day. However, it was an oft-observed event to hear the church bells ring in the New Year from countries such as Venezuela. Such sounds may still be heard on shortwave - if you can locate the right station! Unhappily they are becoming rare signals these days; there is very little left from Venezuela.

To return to the card topic, yours truly has received several such items, especially from Peru. The cards have usually been nicely designed and printed; welcome additions to the QSL collection. The only real disadvantage is when the station used this in lieu of a formal QSL. It became sort of a “thankyou for your report” style of non-QSL, if you follow my reasoning.

From Mother Spain these cards were rare. However, I have had an uncommon pennant on which the Seasons greeting was inscribed. Once again, of course, pennants are NOT verification cards or letters, but most of them were/are beautiful, so that many of us would prefer them!

Well, keep listening, and if you log a new Latin (especially from Peru), send a report a little before Christmas. You might still get lucky and receive a New Years card. Good luck!

I should point out to those less familiar with the customs of the Spanish-speaking world, that celebration of the New Year, as a Christian custom, was often centred around the Twelfth Night (the eve of epiphany, January 6th, when the Magi were supposed to have visited Christ) or January 1st, when some communities had the custom of the traditional Christmas tree and presents for the children.

