



# Looking Back

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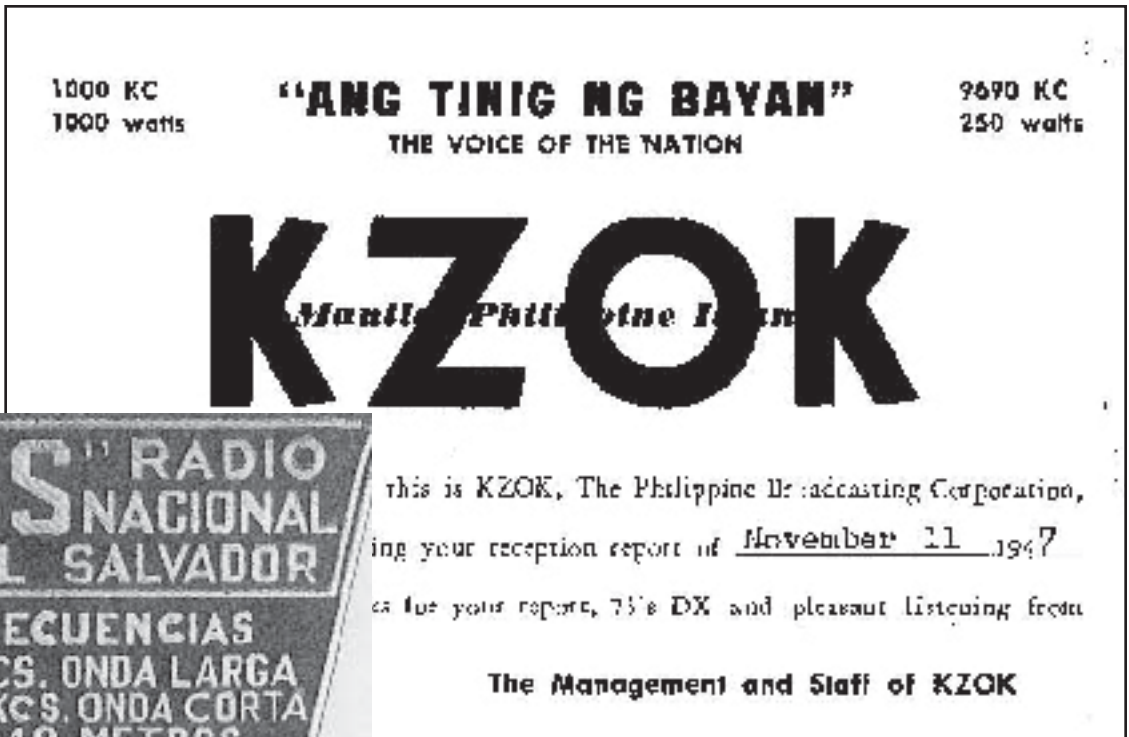
*Looking Back is a nostalgic reflection on the shortwave scene of yesteryears, written from the personal experience of the author, who has been DXing the shortwave bands for over seven decades.*

## Evolution of the QSL Card

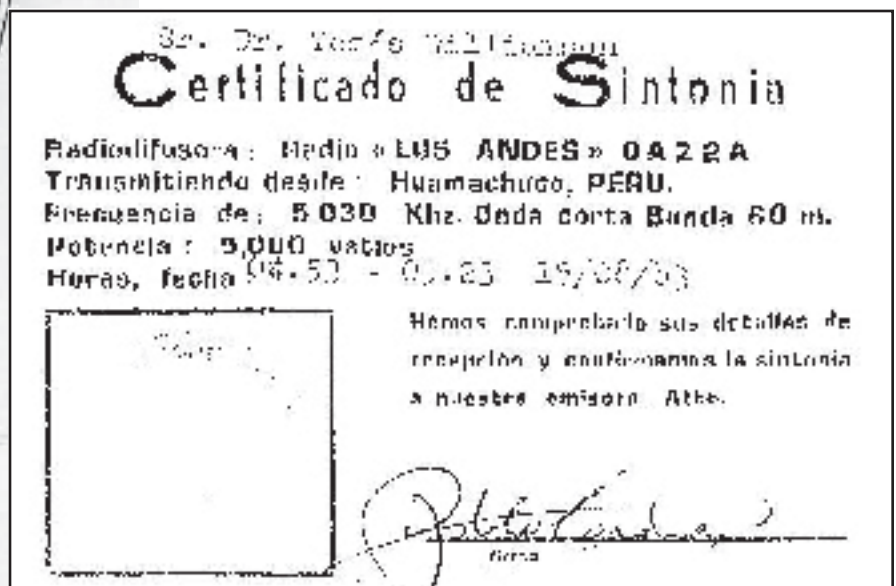
I guess we can begin by probing the origin of that quaint term: "QSL card".

sage. So a QSL card came to mean, to the recipient, that the station had received his report, and by implication, that it was correct.

This originated, I understand, from the international Q code, used by the early Morse Code telegraphy operators, meaning to acknowledge receipt of a mes-

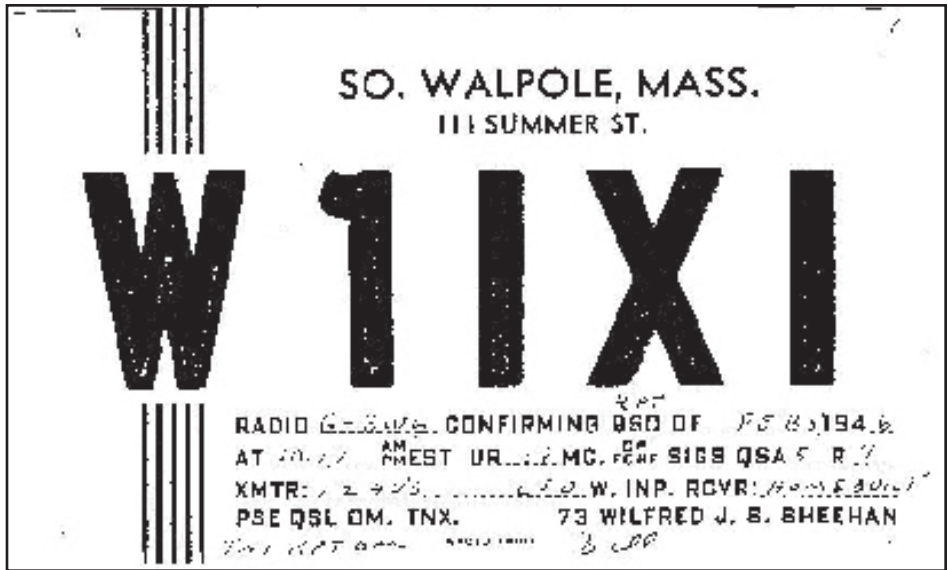


These cards were used and exchanged by "ham" radio operators in the early days to "prove" that they had indeed made contacts by shortwave radio across the globe. And so they set the standards by which a QSL card should be judged (even to this day, in my personal opinion!).

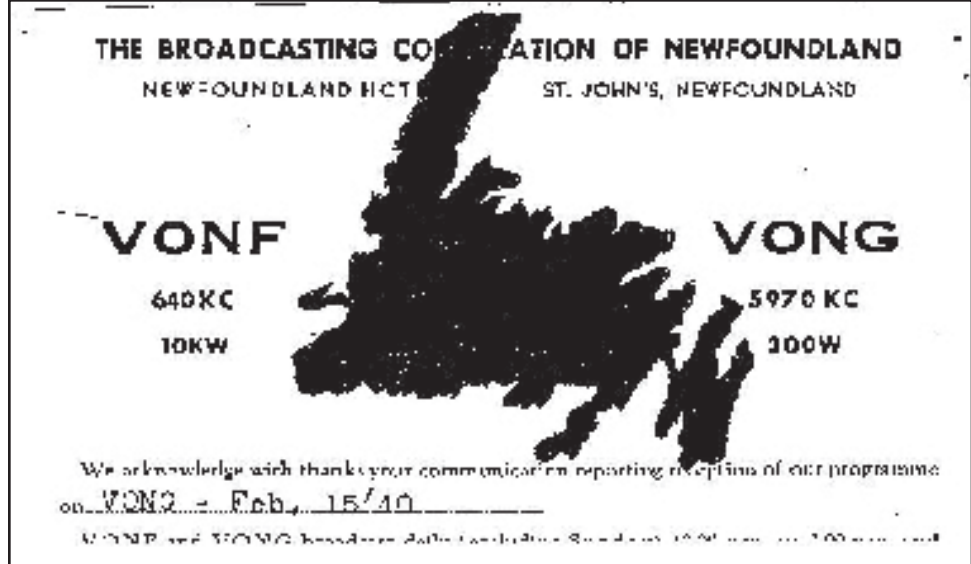


Thus the card would include station callsign, location, time and frequency of reception, and your name. Time includes day and hour in U.T.C. (G.M.T. in olden days).

For the shortwave broadcaster these features were printed/typed in early times, but sadly there has been a drift away from these basics. Callsigns are now defunct and even station names have vanished from some modern station's cards. There has been a sort of progression through map cards (often a very good idea)



picture in recent years is the cost of printing and



correspondence - it takes money and staff (= more money!). Hence, many stations have stopped sending out QSL cards or letters. A variant technique - presumably to save on costs - was the D.I.Y. type of card. Do It Yourself, i.e. YOU fill in the details! NOT a very attractive idea to most of us.

Tempus fugit! I include some photocopies from my collection, to illustrate some of the mentioned points.

to the present day "tourist picture postcard" idea, as I call it. These, to me, are almost obnoxious. If I want to visit a country and send home a "wish you were here" type of geographic viewcard - well, I don't want this to be passed off as a QSL card!

Just recently I have encountered an even more depressing kind of card - the "political" type - e.g. picture of the leaders of North and South Korea shaking hands! Also an interesting card from the Voice of Russia, showing their victorious soldiers winning the "Great Patriotic War" - which seems to be their terminology for World War II.

However, all is not lost. There are still stations that send out good cards with the appropriate data included. Some DXers refer to these as "full data" cards, as if one could LEGALLY "prove" reception, which in my opinion, is not possible, since a clever "cheat" can fake a report. A QSL to me is a record of a special occasion when I caught a new or rare station and it reminds me of my great pleasure at the time.

Of course, we are all different and I'm sure some readers will have different attitudes. That's fine with me.

One of the big factors that has altered the QSL

