

Radio buff brings world to living room

By Jim Fitzroy

At the first news that a Korean Air Lines flight was shot down by the Russians, Peter Dehart went to his short wave radio. From experience he knew just where to tune to get Radio Korea, out of Seoul. He later monitored broadcasts by Radio Moscow and BBC International while collecting several hours of tape on the incident for his library.

"Those of the Russians and Koreans," he says, "have been carefully worded official statements, while the BBC has been more direct."

He regrets he doesn't speak Russian, and would like to know what the Soviets are telling their own people about the disaster. His radio makes him privy to those programs too.

With all the world trying to send out messages ranging from cultural to propagandistic, from emergency to the frivolous, the airwaves are indeed flooded with information.

When he's not involved with this political and cultural diversity of his radio monitoring, Dehart is Capitol Campus' Instructional Services Audio-Visual Scheduler. He is responsible for dispatching audio-visual equipment, projectors, and tape recorders available for use by students and faculty.

After work, Dehart can be found at his short-wave receiver at home. He now uses a Radio Shack DX-220 almost exclusively, hooked up to two antennae - one seventy feet long strung from house to tree, and another 35 feet long running from tree to ground. He moves the antennae from time to time in order to receive broadcasts from various countries.

"Strictly trial and error," he says, "atmospheric conditions can play havoc with reception. Broadcast strength is a factor, too, and sometimes there is intentional jamming."

This arrangement, tempered with his patience, has allowed Dehart to receive broadcasts from as many as 90 countries on every continent.

"The list will certainly grow," he says, "for virtually every country has government-sponsored short-wave facilities and there are numerous clandestine operations that spring up to serve a short term purpose, then disappear. The channels are always alive."

All stations precede their broadcasts with distinctive 'interval signals' that can last up to forty-five minutes to allow listeners to adjust their sets. These introductions are often a national anthem or some native music, though Radio Botswana announces itself with a unique



Peter J. Dehart, Audio-Visual Scheduler for Instructional Services, searches the band for an interesting broadcast (above), while he locates the sender's country on a map (lower left). Dehart has monitored broadcasts from around the world, including foreign reports on the recent downing of Korean Airlines' flight 007.

combination of barnyard animal sounds and cowbells. Radio Tashkent relies on the musical signal, playing melodious traditional instrumentals.

Because of the ability to bring the world into the home, interest in short-wave radio monitoring has spawned many clubs, a few specialty magazines and the firmest evidence of popularity - the first modern commercial short-wave station, WRNC Worldwide, out of New Orleans.

The range of a typical set is so great and new technology so sophisticated that an enthusiast like Dehart always has a pot-pourri of programs to pick from. They come in from across the globe, an insomniac's delight. Though not so afflicted, the father of two will rouse himself in the middle of the night or especially early in the morning to tape a favorite cultural broadcast or an unfolding political drama.

A visitor senses, though, that Dehart's main reason for time spent monitoring and taping, is his curiosity about people and their way of life. The feeling is borne out when he tells of his fascination for travelogues, for broadcasts of indigenous music and those of a cultural nature in general. When his interest is piqued by a particular program or when he comes across a new voice or an unfamiliar language, he heads for the library. Depending on the question, he may consult an atlas, the *Reader's Guide to Periodic Literature*, and a series of "Area Handbooks" that deal

with specific countries, providing detailed information.

The library of tapes collected so far by the Middletown resident covers four major categories: cultural, news, media programming, and some programming suitable to the study of propaganda.

From Voice of Turkey, one can learn about wedding customs in rural Turkey; Radio France Internationale will entertain you with music of African origin; Radio Tahiti features native music; and the highly respected BBC will tell

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**Peter Dehart
Inst. Services Audio-Visual
Scheduler**

you "The Story of Stonehenge."

Once you've listened, it's obvious why Peter Dehart strongly believes in the educational aspect of short-wave monitoring.

"The world is getting smaller," he says, "because of advances in communications technology and increased availability of information."

His way of keeping abreast is by turning on his set and tuning in the world.