



# Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium  
Editor: W0CG

Volume 20, Number 2

February 15, 2020

## K8ND and W8WTS' Highest Ever 160 CW Claimed Score!

QSOs State/Prov Countries Op Time

1528 57 85 27:07

Claimed Score: 2,154,424

K8ND and W8WTS have partnered year in and year out seemingly forever for this, their favorite contest, an act of unbridled masochism. When Jim has been unavailable, Jeff has done single ops. Their wins and near-wins in this contest clearly have established Jim and Jeff as some of the absolute best noise eaters in the world. This year, they scored their highest all-time high claimed score, out of 14 years of activity, as the history table below shows.

2020: 2,154,424 - 1528 - 57 - 85 - 142 (Claimed)  
2019: 1,701,310 - 1319 - 57 - 73 - 130 #2 Multi-Op  
2018: 1,580,971 - 1198 - 59 - 74 - 133 #3 Multi-Op  
2017: 1,792,342 - 1380 - 58 - 73 - 131 #2 Multi-Op  
2016: 1,442,974 - 1146 - 59 - 68 - 127 #1 Multi-Op  
2015: 1,014,762 - 925 - 56 - 55 - 111 #1 Multi-Op  
2014: 1,517,298 - 1185 - 58 - 71 - 129 #1 Multi-Op  
2013: 1,635,625 - 1361 - 58 - 67 - 125 (K8ND: #1 SOHP)  
2012: 1,443,260 - 1231 - 58 - 64 - 122 (K8ND: #1 SOAHP)  
2011: 1,865,025 - 1400 - 59 - 76 - 135 #3 Multi-Op  
2010: 1,739,500 - 1250 - 57 - 85 - 142 #3 Multi-Op  
2009: 2,065,700 - 1497 - 57 - 83 - 140 #3 Multi-Op  
2008: (No PJ2T Operation)  
2007: 2,047,480 - 1516 - 58 - 78 - 136 #2 Multi-Op  
2006: 1,303,965 - 1119 - 59 - 58 - 117 (K8ND: #2 SOHP)

This year's competition was a particular challenge because construction activity (story follows) had put the Europe Beverage out of service, and because deploying the 4-square this year required re-establishing the locations for the whips in the Flats. Summer bulldozing had wrecked the old site. Prior to Jim's arrival Jeff made up new sets of radials,

consuming nearly 1000 feet of wire. When Jim was on site they cleverly made a set of moveable bases for the four whips and the center post by pouring concrete into 5 quart metal paint buckets (below). This was needed because the antenna field will be vulnerable to bulldozers at any time, so we need to remove these bases each contest.



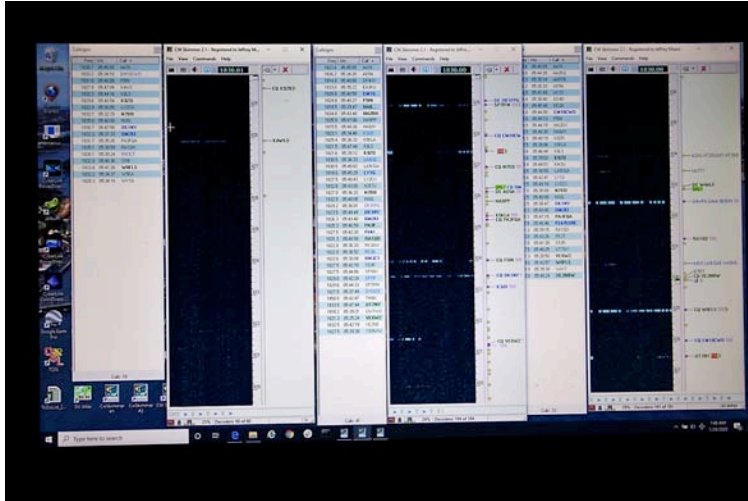
Portable concrete buckets bases for the 4SQ by W8WTS and K8ND

Installing the 4 square was particularly challenging this time because of the need to survey and measure the exact locations for each antenna whip.

Jim also had to install about 80 feet of wire to repair damage to the Europe Beverage by an excavator. Then on Thursday they fabricated and installed an 880 foot US/JA Beverage in its old location along the ocean edge. This site is better than the permanent one on the Ridge, so this extra effort is worth it.

Following that, they installed and configured the additional CW skimmers shown below so that all possible weapons for the contest would be in readiness. All in all, making it to Friday's contest kickoff was a

miracle of careful logistical planning and hard work for the entire week before.



CW Skimmer systems set up by WTS and ND for the 160 CW contest.

Here are their 3830 comments.

*Congratulations to IG9/S59A, CR3W, P40AA, and all of the other category winners for great results in a fun contest. All of the competitors, especially the Europeans, are inching the bar higher and higher every year.*

*For the eleventh year, PJ2T was operated in the multiop, high power category by Jeff, K8ND and Jim, W8WTS. Jeff and I have been operating together for many years, always pushing each other to send louder and listen harder on top band. Conditions were well above average this year, allowing us to score our second (? , Ed.) highest finish in this contest.*

*Improvements and maintenance never end at a world class contest station located 3500 km from home. Jeff arrived the weekend before the contest, checking the antennas and equipment, making to-do lists, and staging the tools, parts and materials needed for upgrades and repairs. Jeff found very few breakdowns or problems at the station. The most serious was a broken beverage due to some construction in the area. I arrived on Tuesday before the contest. Jeff and I started outdoor work on Wednesday. All things considered, there was very little outdoor repair needed. The beverage was easy to splice back together, so we started down the lists.*

*Some of our receiving antennas are set up temporarily for contests and brought in afterward to thwart theft and to keep them in like-new condition. We have deployed our DX Engineering active four square receiving antenna so many times that it takes little time and almost no effort. The antennas and parts seem to know where to go. This year, we made five movable bases for the antennas out of paint cans, rebar and concrete, so that we can fine tune the orientation of the four square. We use a Brunton pocket transit to accurately set the directions for the elements. There is a run along the edge of the water where we used to have a permanent beverage pointed toward USA and JA (both are in the same direction from Curacao), but the antenna was removed to make room for some construction down the road from the station. That beverage location always yielded good performance, so we installed a temporary 268m beverage along the edge of the cliff above the water.*

*After dark, we worked on our setup of five separate CW Skimmers, each fed from a different receive antenna via various combinations of active receive antenna multicouplers and magic T splitters. We use two powerful Dell Precision mobile workstations to run the five instances of CW Skimmer software and a local DX Cluster node server to aggregate the spot streams, filter the spots and deliver them over the station LAN to the logging computers. We made QSOs to verify operation of everything. I operated in the CWOps Mini-test on Wednesday evening and the NCCC Sprint on Thursday evening to help find bugs in the station and because they are both very fun contests. By Friday, all of the SDRs, antennas, computers and software were running great. We set up the log template and relaxed prior to the contest start.*

*At 2200Z, CQWW 160 starts in full daylight at PJ2T. The first hour is always a slog, where we work all of the big USA stations in the first few minutes then listen to the Europeans, who have been in darkness for two hours, feed on each other like a tank of piranhas. The USA stations are listening for a bite at Europe, so no one is listening in PJ2T's direction. After the first hour, we logged only 23 QSOs and 18 multipliers.*

*The pace picked up in the second hour as the sun started setting, having 93 QSOs and 40 multipliers at 0000Z. Signals were good the first night, but not excellent. We noted rapid QSB that made callsigns difficult to get on the first try. We worked our JAs the first night approaching local sunrise. We ended the first night with 950 QSOs and 123 multipliers.*

*We started the second night at 2200 Z, with a predictably weak first hour in full daylight. As the band opened up the second night, signals from both NA and Europe were clean and solid. We were able to beat our QSO goals for 8 hours the second night. The last QSO on Sunday morning was at 1154Z with W6UB. Sunday afternoon was spent storing some of our receive antennas and picking up after the contest furor. There is very little to work during the last hours of the contest, but we were on the air calling just in case the odd Caribbean station showed up. We did manage to work 1 station (KP4TG) in the final hours of the contest.*

*It appears that we have the top score in North America and South America. Those Europeans are very hard to beat when they step over into Africa or Asia. Nonetheless, it was a very fun contest with the second night providing some of the best conditions in recent memory. We thank everyone for their QSOs and are already looking forward to next year.*

Very 73,

Jim, W8WTS and Jeff, K8ND

### WPX RTTY Contest Report

Class: SOAB HP  
QTH: Signal Point  
Operating Time (hrs): 10  
Operator: WI9WI

Band	QSOs
80:	0
40:	168
20:	404
15:	229
10:	0

Total: **801** Prefixes **359** Total Score **1,032,843**

Jim got snookered by a family event and then by a cancelled flight, arriving at Signal Point three days later than planned, and dog tired. In spite of that he managed to get in 10 hours of operating and 801 QSOs.

### ARRL DX CW Is Underway

The contest is happening as you read this. We'll have a full report and photos in the March newsletter. Here's the team, except that we are missing our great friends K2PLF and WA9S this year.



L-R: Jim (K9JF), Rudy (NF9V), Geoff (W0CG/PJ2DX), Gene (KB7Q), Bill (W9VA), Dan (K9DR), Jim (WI9WI), Tom (VE3CX), 13 February 2020.

### Nice Online Publicity for PJ2T

Have a look at this very complimentary article about us in the DX Engineering weblog. (Call me crazy, but I hate the term "blog.") The article contains a link to a video interview with me about PJ2T's evolution.

<https://www.onallbands.com/ham-radio-history-pj2t-ham-radios-most-logged-callsign/?fbclid=IwAR0yAuq6iSYRwMclKs6crs8yvXlljDokCn9GISkOvZCerbqaeVPyZ5cElk>

### Thanks WB9Z (Again)

Here's (next page) KA9DOC with Jerry's QSL card and the two hardline connectors he donated. These are key to fixing breeches in the 7/8 inch Heliac to the Ridge. Seems like we are thanking Jerry very often for all he has done for us. VE3CX also donated connectors to this cause, so we are in good shape in that department now.





Annette, KA9DOC (WI9WI's) XYL with the WB9Z hardline connectors.

### **PJ2T's ASUS Router Now Runs 24/7 365 Days per Year**

In January I installed the two Ring surveillance cameras described later in the newsletter. Those cameras connect to the ASUS router on the operating desk where K8ND's QSL digital frame resides. This is preferred over connecting those cameras to the DSL MODEM because that belongs to the phone company, we don't really control it, and it could be forcibly replaced by them at any time.

The problem then becomes that power to the ASUS router goes off when the QTH is uninhabited and the "Red Plug" is unplugged. To counter that problem, on February 2 I installed permanent power to the ASUS router from a previously unused and blocked off outlet in the wall behind the love seat. This is 130 volt 50 Hz power, but the supply for the router is fine with anything between 110 and 230 volts 50 or 60Hz, so we will be fine with this new power source.



Installing permanent power to the ASUS router.

It took a little over three hours of effort, but this new power source is safe, out of the way, and unobtrusive. I secured it to the masonry wall in several locations (photo below), left a loop for when we pull out the operating tables, and provided a single 110 VAC

socket for the router. After some modifications the cover plate is now back in place. If not for this article you would never have noticed anything different. Thanks N0YY for the leftover cable clamps!



Installing anchors in the masonry wall under the lamp table by the love seat. (K8ND photo)

When people depart Signal Point and unscrew the specified fuses, the router stays on, even with the "Red Plug" out. This change will give us all day every day coverage with the Ring cameras.

### **Coral Cliff Neighborhood News**

The developers of the hotel finally held a two and a half hour information session for the owners in the Coral Cliff neighborhood. Construction now awaits the outcome of negotiation with two possible operators, such as Hilton and Hyatt. They hope to reach an agreement and begin construction in the second half of 2020. Phase 1 will be a 300 room hotel in a four or five story building and several smaller lodging outbuildings on the campus. All of this will be at the far west end of the flats, not planned to come any closer to Signal Point than roughly where we put up the DXE 4-Square. The immediate area of the beach and the old restaurant will remain publicly accessible.

If the first hotel succeeds, then in six to eight years they propose to build an additional 500 rooms, and this is targeted for the flats between our house and the 4-Square site. This would not be welcome, but it years and millions in the future.

Nothing was said about any development of single family houses either on the beach or above.

They plan to reroute the road through Soto to get it away from the school, totally rehabilitate the existing

road, and move the far end of it so that the hill to the resort is not so steep. All new utility lines will be installed from Soto to the neighborhood.

They have assured us that the dump piles are temporary.

In other news, Girobank has failed and closed suddenly with the result that the neighborhood HOA lost half of the 16,000 guilders we had on deposit there. This does not affect CCC, but it's not a welcome development for us who own property. This is an ever-present reminder that we are NOT in the United States.

### CCC Financial Snapshot

W8WTS reports that the end of January balance in the treasury is \$2754.15 after most of the big disbursement for the NR0X tower maintenance trip. Since that report, I spent another ~\$1200 from that account for our new safe to secure the K3s. This is the time of year when funds are very scarce, and we look forward to dues revenue in June and some additional Station Support fees connected with the upcoming five winter contests at PJ2T.

### Let's Give it a Whirl: World Wide Digi DX Contest Upcoming August 29

August 29-30 will be the second running of this new contest that is sponsored by the World Wide Radio Operators Foundation and the Slovenia Contest Club. The 24 hour contest runs from Curacao local 8 AM Saturday until 8 AM Sunday. 1329 logs were submitted last year and 2020 promises a large increase in activity now that the word has spread.

FT4 and/or FT8 are used on the six primary bands and you can work a callsign once per band, regardless of whether it is FT4 or FT8. The exchange is your grid square, with one point per QSO or 2 points for QSOs exceeding 3000 KM. Each grid square is a multiplier. Entries may be single op, M/2, M/M and high or low power. Packet and all other forms of QSO finding assistance are permitted.

Last year ZW5B won in M/M with 1052 QSOs and 155 mults. 9A1A made the most QSOs at 1,505 but had a lesser score because many of the squares worked were nearby. Our member VE3CX scored very well.

This could be really fun in a multi transmitter category because rotten band conditions on 10 and 15 might not seem so insurmountable for these modes.

Anybody interested? It would be a hoot to put PJ2T on the air for this one. Because the contest comes in the period when the QTH is seldom visited and is most vulnerable to thefts, your trip there would benefit the club in more ways than one.

### Tower Work Week in Progress at PJ2T

Our professional climber Jason Joens (NR0X) is here for his first week of work as our outside maintenance man. We've already gotten a lot done as of press time, and we've also discovered that the work will take much longer than anticipated and that not everything will get finished.

One top priority was to rehabilitate the WARC rotor and mounting plate, and that is almost finished. This is a very difficult job that requires lots of custom work, and he had to grind off the hardware to get that old rotor and plate out. We extensively rebuilt the old PJ9JT homemade rotor shelf, and we added a backer and stiffener plate that Geoff fabricated in Idaho almost five years ago. Tomorrow we hope to install a new rotor and get that antenna turning again for the first time in many years. We'll have a full report in the March newsletter. Here's Jason in place in the WARC tower



NR0X working on removing the WARC rotor and plate, 13 February 2020.





Prior page: VE3CX and W0CG attaching the backer plate to the old PJ9JT custom rotor shelf.

### The New Safe Is Installed

On January 29 I bought the SistecMT+ safe at Kennedy's Key Lock and Safe near Willemstad. The manager had been kind enough to hold it for me for a month, based only on my phone call from the States, and with no deposit.

Once I got it home there was a challenge in lifting it out of the back well in the Kia and up onto the boards I laid across the wheelbarrow (below).

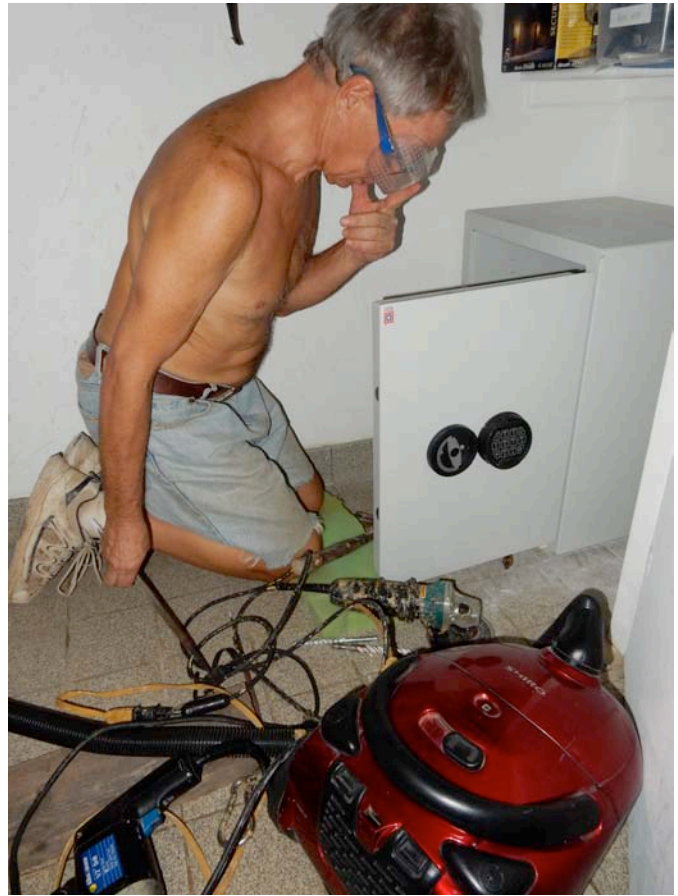


The new safe in the back of the car.

Unluckily for him, but fortunately for me and Jeff, Zoom happened by at the exact moment we were ready to attempt this lift, and we got it into the East Bedroom fairly easily with the wheelbarrow and three pairs of hands.

After the massive job of clearing years of stuff out of that bedroom closet, I wrestled the safe into position and then set about the tricky job of anchoring it to the concrete floor for security. (There are holes for this in the bottom of the safe.) I inserted some 1x3 lumber between the floor and the safe because on rare occasions we have had half an inch or so of water in that bedroom, and the bottom of the safe needed to be off the floor.

It took quite a bit of effort to break out floor tiles and then drill 5 inch holes through the wood and into the concrete floor working inside the safe with the drill and angle grinder. But now the safe is in place and it will be difficult for the bad guys to remove it if they even get in, get to that closet, and find the safe.



Here I am with safety glasses, a good precaution when using the angle grinder to cut off the anchor bolts inside the safe. (K8ND photo)

The electronic lock runs on a 9 volt battery, and it is easy to do that replacement. A six-digit code opens the safe, which will contain four K3s and three or four of our small cigarette package PCs. The cost was \$1218.41 plus some small costs for the concrete anchors. This is a significant amount, but the consensus among the CCC leadership is that it was worth this cost to secure about \$11,000 worth of our hardware. No safe is 100% secure, but with the bad guys more like Keystone Cops than the Pink Panther in sophistication, we feel confident this was a good expenditure.



Here's how the K3s and some PCs will fit.

### Ring Security Cameras Now Online at Signal Point

In late January I installed two Ring solar powered wireless surveillance cameras at Signal Point. With the break-in attempt last September and the increase in browsing tourists and construction workers in the area, it seemed prudent to invest in these cams. The photo shows the completed installation on the West (main door) Porch.



West Porch Ring camera.

The conduit contains the power wire to a solar panel, shown in the next column.



2 watt solar panel that powers the West Porch Ring.

These cameras trigger when they detect motion anywhere in their 140 degree field of view. The system then sends a text notification to my smartphone, anywhere in the world, and I can then view the video. The system also has sophisticated capability to monitor battery condition and many other parameters of camera operation. I can plainly see, for example, the batteries draw down to about 89% overnight and then recharge to 100% when the sun reaches the solar panels. For a modest annual fee, every video captured by either camera is stored in the cloud, and I suspect it will be worth our while to pay this cost. Otherwise videos are only kept for 24 hours.

After dark, detected motion turns on a very bright LED light and also opens an audio channel so I can talk to the crooks through the camera and also record everything that they say. The speaker is *loud*. The light times out after three minutes, also an adjustable parameter.

The functionality of these cameras is very, very impressive, and the \$500 cost for two of them, which I covered out of the real estate fund, seems warranted.

The West camera can see all of the porch, part of the sidewalk from the side gate, and most of the yard in front of the picture window. The East camera sees the porch and all of the ocean side of the sliding glass doors to the sunroom as well as the path to that east shower. Motion in any of these areas triggers the cams.

I'll give you a demo on site or at Dayton, and if these work well long term we may consider adding one more to cover the backyard and man gate entrance. Our equipment at Signal Point is safer than ever, as the bad guys know about these cameras and tend to avoid sites where they're installed.



## Additional Security Measures Installed at Signal Point

Since we never had a serious attempt to break in over a 19 year period, I had gotten a little lazy. About half of the padlocks at the QTH were protected hasp designs, and the thieves did leave them alone. But they cut through the open-hasps locks like butter. After some research I selected some much better quality padlocks, and you see them in the photo on my desk in Idaho, ready to go with all of the keys labeled. The best locks are about \$200 each, and we can't do that, but the ones shown are highly rated by locksmiths, and much more secure for the cost, about \$35 each.



New padlocks for Signal Point

I installed all of these new locks last week, and distributed new keys (I got 22 made in Idaho) to everyone except PJ2BR and SM4KYN, who will receive them as soon as I'm able.

Additionally, I bought two security spotlights. These are LED bulbs with motion detectors built in. This was an experiment. I put them into the lamp sockets up on the northwest corner of the house, by the entry gate, and they work great. The lights are very bright, do not trigger on blowing trees or animals, and time out at four minutes. They are rated for 25,000 hours of service. This way, there will be a dark pool at that corner, much better than the old always-on light that guided bad guys to the house and gate. But when they walk in they will immediately be blinded by two very bright lights. At \$18 each these are a tremendous bargain.

As another measure, I'm installing conductive tape next week on the picture window and hope to have time to put in a motion sensor for the main room. It will be linked to the CSS security system.

Short of full time armed guards and hungry dogs, we have now done everything reasonable that can be done

to protect our valuable equipment. Your dues are being used prudently and effectively. I will sleep easier when I'm away, and hopefully you will too.

## Farewell to K8LEE

I'm sorry to report that our former CCC member Wayne McKenzie, K8LEE, became a silent key on January 16 at age 77. Wayne was a member for several years, and was a superb operator who also had very wide ranging skills as an engineer, technician, climber, station builder, and all-around nice guy.

His signature phraseology on the air was always the same: "My name is "Wayne" like John Wayne, the Western actor. " It brought a broad smile to my face every time I heard him say that.

For a couple of years Wayne spent a very extended period of weeks at the Curacao QTH by himself, enjoying the warmth, lots of QSOs, and a hike to the Sunset Waters lagoon every afternoon for a tropical dip. In that era he brought a superb high power 6 meter amp to the station and made a lot of noise on Six with that kilowatt that he had homebrewed from an Alpha 86.



K8LEE: February 19, 2011



IN the photo Wayne's showing off dessert, his second piece (as I recall) of chocolate cake with chocolate icing and a Coke. He always made me, the cake baker, feel very much appreciated.

Wayne was a tough, made-of-metal kind of guy. When I met him he had already survived multiple medical challenges, any one of which would have taken a lesser mortal. But he braved through many crises and kept pushing. Many times he climbed the towers with me when we had heavy, hard work to do, often in an emergency, and he was strong and durable and not about to let a measly little terminal illness deter him.



March 20, 2010, K8LEE atop the VERONA tower in Willemstad installing a new yagi with me.

I also enjoyed hearing his many war stories about being on the road as a Siemens Field Engineer, solving both technical and people problems with speed and excellence at customer locations. Wayne had one of the loudest signals I have ever heard in Curacao, in an excellent location in Southeast Indiana and firing RF out across the Ohio River ravine to his south. He was a superb Christian gentleman and friend, and all of us in CCC valued his friendship and will miss him greatly.

## More CCC Historic Photos



July 11, 2003, original CCC member K4LT (Doug, now AD8CW) running 15 in the IARU Radiosport Contest.



November 1997, N8LGP and W8AV trial assembling a tower at W0CG's Ohio QTH prior to shipping it to VP5 for ARRL DX CW.



February 1998, our longest continuously active CCC member Keith (WA9S) running 10 CW in ARRL DX CW signing VP5FXB.

**PJ2T Antenna Stories: The Ringo Ranger**

A 2 meter vertical that is not relevant to contesting seems non-glorious, but this antenna shows off some of our best lessons about seaside antenna corrosion.

I installed this antenna in 2001 outside the house on the ocean side so that we'd have base station capability to talk to project workers around the site and on the Ridge via HT, and to be able to use the island's excellent repeaters. There was no naturally "right" route for the feedline, so I just brought it out of the bulkhead and laid it on the ground to the base of the mast. This has served perfectly since then. But in about three years many of the non-tubing aluminum parts had corroded so badly in the salt air that they had become a glob of gooey green oxidation product, and one day the antenna simply fell down to the ground, broken at the matching coil. Unbelievable.

I scrounged Ringo parts from broken antennas in the States and brought them back next trip, and rebuilt the antenna almost from scratch. After verifying that it tuned properly, I wrapped ALL of the exposed parts except the tubing in duct seal and tape. This looked ridiculous, but has held up perfectly ever since.

Then in 2013 the mast, a galvanized steel pole, was approaching failure, as shown in the next column.



A finger-sized hole in the Ringo Ranger steel mast, March 27, 2013.

This was the time of WPX, so with help on board VE7AM and N0KE and I decided to put an end to Ringo maintenance once and for all and replace the mast, house bracket, and the balance of the hardware with forever parts. Below David and Phil have remounted the antenna on an aluminum mast and we're weatherproofing and preparing to put it back up.



VE7AM and N0KE working on the Ringo Ranger, March 27, 2013.

After considerable rework and a couple coats of epoxy paint, here's the antenna ready to go back up on a new aluminum bracket on April 1. Notice in the next photo that all vulnerable parts are potted in putty and sealed with tape.





Ringo Ranger just before reinstallation in 2013.

Since that date this antenna and mast assembly are in like new condition, perform perfectly, and have required zero maintenance. This is consistent with our goal at PJ2T to aggressively reduce maintenance load whenever we have equipment accessible for work.

### **More Construction Destruction – The Terrorists Return**

On Friday, January 17 our next door neighbor Mike Maley sent me the shocking news that a giant excavator was working at the top of the Ridge immediately across the street from the house. This brought about total panic because the Europe Beverage and the feedlines to the Ridge tribander and new US Beverage are in almost exactly that spot where the guy was working. Mike even sent a short video showing the yellow monster slashing away up there in an area that has been totally undisturbed since geology pushed up the ocean floor and created the island.



An absolutely horrifying sight.

The attack of the bulldozers in the flats happened in June immediately before K8ND's arrival on the island.

Now it had happened again because Jeff arrived at Signal Point on the day of the attack on the Ridge. The hotel owners had not given the slightest hint that they would ever be working up there, and we were not sure that they were even working on land that they own.

I had a couple of terrible sleepless nights over this, speculating on what they were up to and trying to figure out how to make repairs to all the damage they were surely doing. Thanks to great drone photography by K8ND and sleuthing on the Ridge by W8WTS, we now have a pretty good understanding of what they were up to, and repairs have been made.



This K8ND drone photo shows the hacked out area, ending at the edge of the cliff. The Europe Beverage wire runs immediately through this area, and W8WTS was successful in replacing about 80 feet of missing wire. That antenna is now working again, but it's now exposed for a distance along the cut out vegetation. The Europe Beverage feedline is still intact.

W8WTS investigated further and found that the Ridge Heliacx and the RG-6 to the Ridge US/JA Beverage were not damaged, thank goodness, as the machine stopped about 60 feet short of the route of those cables. The initial video from Mike Maley made it look like the excavator was right on top of those cable routes, but fortunately that was a bit of an optical illusion and we are OK at present.

The Ridge tower itself is hundreds of feet clear of the area of construction, and Dirk van Daam (across street neighbor) says he is certain that the hotel does not own the land anywhere near the tower.

Then in another crisis Jim and Jeff discovered that on Wednesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> the excavator had started working at ground level immediately across the street and butted up against the east side of the concrete foundation of our new neighborhood gate.



Photo by W8WTS

This was another total panic because he was scooping and scraping material from east of the gate, precisely where our Heliac and RG-6 run, and was at that moment standing atop the buried route for the Europe Beverage feedline. Worse, the power and water lines and telephone (DSL) that feed our neighborhood are directly where this machine was carelessly working. By sheer luck he stopped only one foot short of ripping out the Heliac. We determined later that he was OFF HIS PROPERTY by about six meters, and he has been warned that he busted the property line and to stay away. The Europe Beverage feedline miraculously survived. We have no idea why they are working that close to the line, but Mike Maley and Dirk had quite a chat with the crew about this.

On Thursday the excavation guys ripped out a power line somewhere west of us and K8ND suffered through an 8+ hour outage. These guys are not to be trusted.

As for the work on top, it is now apparent from K8ND's magnificent drone video that their objective was to extend the old existing "road" on the top level directly east to the cliff edge, and then to mark off the edge lines of possible future building lots up there. You can view Jeff's magnificent video of this area at

<https://youtu.be/dykDw0AkIPc>

You'll see W8WTS' car (red roof) parked on that road and Jim himself standing at the end of the road at the cliff top.

So for now we are OK, thanks to heroic work by Jeff to stage all of the needed tools and materials before Jim arrived, and then to Jim for working hard in the heat up there to make repairs.

For now it appears that the Ridge tower, its feedline, the new US/JA Beverage, and its feedline are all OK.

After my arrival I did some additional recon and repositioned and obscured cables as much as possible

to keep them clear of these monsters. Additionally, I'm putting together a kit of connectors and additional Heliac so that I will have assets on site ready to quickly repair a break in the 7/8 inch Heliac. As mentioned previously, thanks to our former long-time CCC member WB9Z for donating two costly and hard to find hardline connectors to that effort. VE3CX then added two more donated connectors.

That all said, its still fact that we do not own that land and have little to no right to be up there. I'm hoping that once the construction work settles down that things will once again go quiet up there and we can relax once they start building the hotel proper on the site of the old Sunset Waters.

### **Ridge Hardline Repositioned on February 1**

As detailed above, on January 22 the heavy equipment arrived unexpectedly again and attacked the area immediately across the street from our QTH (photo). The yellow rope is the property line.



K8ND and W8WTS were on site to witness this, but were powerless to stop it. We have absolutely no idea why they were working right up against the east line of their property, and it was a panic because our 7/8 inch Heliac runs very near this area, as well as the phone, electric, and water lines to the neighborhood. Also, our Europe Beverage feedline is buried in conduit under the area they scraped bare.

I strung out the yellow rope in the photo to mark the exact property line, and after doing so it was clear that in places the excavator worked as much as 18 feet into property that they do not own. They snagged and crimped but thank goodness did not break our 7/8 inch Heliac, and I put a splint on that area of the cable to



prevent the cable from folding when moved. It still works fine.

To my surprise our feedline did at one point up the slope violate the property line by about four feet where it curved west around a gigantic rock. Who would have thought, because when I installed that cable in 2007 it was on hands and knees in unbelievably thick vegetation and I had lost my orientation. Seeing this, it occurred to me that it might be possible to reposition our Heliacx to the east side of that rock and move it substantially away from the property line and further harm. On February 1 I opened the Ridge hardline where it is buried across the road and as you see below that connector was still in fine shape after 14 years in the ground. At times this cable has handled 4200 watts on 10, 15, and 20 simultaneously!



W0CG pushing the Heliacx coil away from the camera, then behind the rock.

This worked out nicely, and Jeff caught me coming out from behind the rock on the right side, now rolling down the slope. This thing is awkward and very heavy.



One of four splice points in the Heliacx to the Ridge

From the point where I opened the line, I wrestled the Heliacx into a coil and rolled it progressively up the hill toward the big rock, which is about the size of two pickup trucks. This required a couple hours of hacking out very thick vegetation, very very hot in long pants and long sleeves..

Here's a K8ND photo of me with the coil up the slope, about to haul it around the left side of the rock, then behind it left to right, and hoping to re-emerge with the coil from the right side.



I unrolled the coil down a route about 10 feet east of its prior location, and this required a couple more hours of hacking through the brush (next photo).





Geoff wrangling the feedline down the slope after clearing dense brush and cactus.

After about five hours of effort the cable end was in place and ready to re-connect (below) and, as I had expected, this re-route gained us about 30 inches of cable length.



Junction in the Heliac, ready to be reconnected.

I cleaned up the connectors, put it together, tested, and then re-weatherproofed, slid on the PVC protector tube, and reburied this junction. All works fine, and the cable is now very much safer, well away from the property line and the reach of the excavators.

Happily, you can stand at the end of the Signal Point west perimeter wall and sight a line along the new gate, the yellow rope and the prior photo, and up to a survey marker at the top of the Ridge, and they all align perfectly. Both our infrastructure on the way up to the Ridge and the Ridge tower and antenna are well clear of the hotel's property line. These guys have caused us some very significant heartburn this year, but we're going to prevail and survive.

## I'm a Good Packer

I miss the old days when we got two 70 pound pieces of luggage free. Now it's one piece, 50 pounds max, and so it's always a big sweat when I check luggage. The photo shows the airline scale at Spokane, Washington, when I checked in for my flight on January 26. 50.0 pounds exactly. Our scale at home agreed, thank goodness. No heartburn on this check-in.



Geoff's checked bag at precisely 50.0 pounds on the airline scale.

## Recycling the Europe Tower

Below (red shirt) is our neighbor from Westpunt, Kurt Kalt, HB9YFC, and three of his Antillean friends. Kurt recently bought a home at the west end of Curacao and is gradually establishing a station. He took three sections and the base plate of the rusty old Rohn 55 tower off the stack neatly built last year by SM4KYN and Ingela. I let him have these free, in the best spirit of ham radio. He made a modest donation anyway, which I applied immediately to the costs of our station's security enhancements. A 30 foot tower is all he wants and needs on his high ground at home.



HB9YFC hauling off three sections of the Europe tower on January 28.



## Member Spotlight: Dr. Jim Fitzpatrick, WI9WI

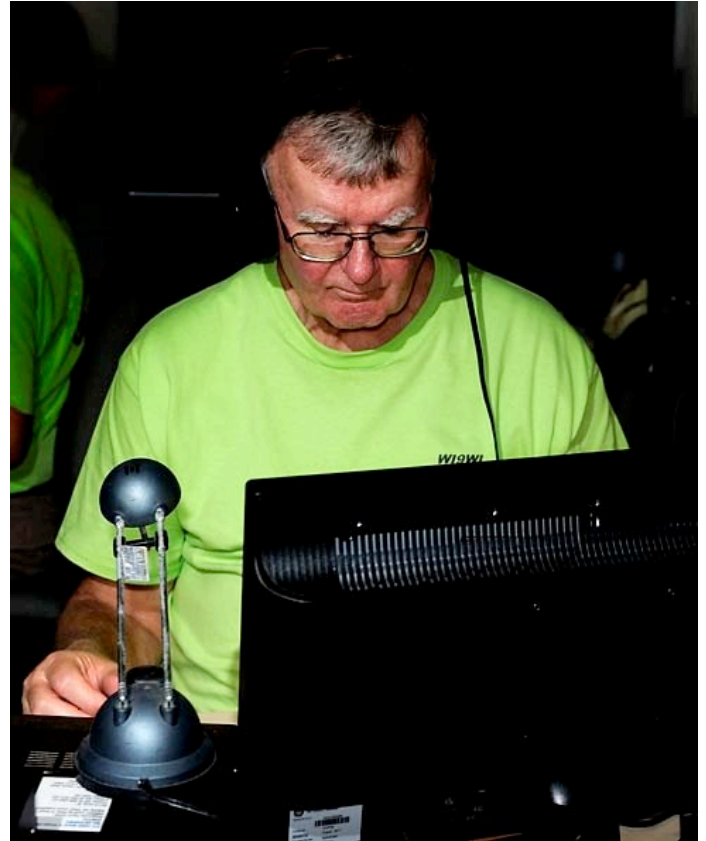
I was born in far upstate New York, but we moved to Bethlehem, PA when I was 3 when my dad took a job with the Lehigh Valley RR. My first exposure to ham radio came when I was 9 or 10 years old. I had expressed an interest after reading about it in magazines, so my father took me to the home of a coworker who was a ham. We went there on a Sunday, when he had a regular schedule on 20 meter AM with his daughter who lived in Australia. I don't remember his call or much about his station except for some BIG boxes and he had a beam.

A few years later in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade my friend Bill who sat behind me in math class told me about a novice class being held at the local CD center. The instructors were George Knapp, W3EKL, who had been a Navy CW man in WW II who taught us the code, and Mr. Bruch whose call I can't remember who did the theory. After a few weeks I took the test and became KN3EXV in June of 1958. My first QSO was with my neighbor Gil, K3BLN, on 2 meters with the old yellow Gonset "Gooney Boxes" loaned from the CD center. I still work Gil on CW when I'm at PJ2T and in various contests. I talked my dad into buying a used Hallicrafters S-40B and a DX-40 kit to build. I still have the S-40B. My antenna was a wire out the window of my bedroom to a tree maybe 60 ft away and 20 ft up. Not exactly a DX antenna.

I spent the next year as a rock bound novice calling 3x-3x-3x CQs on 40 and 80 meters and tuning the entire novice subband looking for an answer. A Q-multiplier helped a bit with the QRM. In June 1959 it was time to upgrade or lose it. My friend Tom KN3GVP and I went to Philadelphia for the ordeal in front of the FCC Engineer. We both passed the theory, but flunked the code. We were both really nervous. So we got upgraded to Tech on the spot and went back a few weeks later and we both passed the code. I was then K3EXV. I got a VF-1 VFO, built it, and spent a fair amount of time on the air while in high school. One of my QSOs was with John, K4BAI, over 60 years ago while we were both in high school.

My intro to contesting came like many others during FD in 1960. Our little local club farmed us kids out to the Delaware Lehigh ARC. We were literally "farmed out" since the FD site was a member's farm across the Delaware River in NJ, so we were /2. Our job was to keep the chairs warm for the "real ops" during the wee hours of the night and make what QSOs we could. On one of our FD excursions Tom and I were sleeping in an old army pup tent. At sunrise we opened the front flap and a very large cow stuck its head into the tent. It

took a lot of hollering and arm waving to get her to back out. My first single op contest was SS CW in 1961. I made about 56 QSOs in 8 hours. And SS then was over 2 weekends. Interestingly, the Ontario winner that year was Paul, W0AIH/VE3.



After graduation from high school I went to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore where I majored in Chemistry. Radio took a far back seat to school and other interests (I was on the baseball team) and my license expired in 1964. Back then you had to be able to show "activity" to renew, and I didn't have any and didn't want to lie about it like some did. In my senior year one of my roommates in a rowhouse we rented was John Shew, now N4QQ. You may know him!). He was a member of the JHU radio club and we went to the station a couple of times in the wee hours so I could operate. Nowadays this would be legal, back then I'm not so sure, but I think the statute of limitations has expired.

In 1964 I entered the Army as a deferred induction enlistee. After graduation from Hopkins in 1966 I went to BCT at Ft Dix, NJ, and then infantry AIT at Ft. MacClellan, AL. Since my future was looking dim then as an 11B10 I applied for Signal OCS and was tested, interviewed and accepted. So it was off to Ft. Gordon, GA for 6 months, commissioning, and then Ft. Monmouth, NJ for a few months of microwave

radio school. After that I was assigned to Ft. Bragg, NC and the 50<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion, the Corps Signal Battalion of the XVIII Airborne Corps. Then to Ft Benning, GA for 3 weeks of jump school and back to Bragg, where I was the platoon leader of the HF platoon of A Company.

After MLK was assassinated we were sent to Baltimore for a couple of weeks with a battalion of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne for civil disturbance control. In July of 1968 I was sent to Viet Nam where I was a platoon leader, company XO and briefly company commander of C Company of the 369<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion. We ran the long lines wideband microwave network in the Mekong Delta. We used mainly Lenkurt FRC-109 and REL-2600 rf equipment. Some links were LOS and others tropo. I spent a lot of time on the road and in the air going between our various signal sites. Every site also had an HF radio, and there was a certain amount of bootlegging on HF.

On return from Viet Nam I entered grad school at the University of Wisconsin hoping to get a PhD in chemistry and enter academia. After a couple of years I decided that my career goal was not what I thought it was and left the program to try to get into med school. While I was working before starting med school I decided to re-obtain my radio license, and studying on my own became WN9HRO in 1971. I built a DX-60 and VFO (no more rocks for novices!!!) and operated enough to go to Chicago and take the test to upgrade to general in 1973 and become WB9HRO. No problem with the code that time. Since then I've upgraded through Advanced in 1982 to Extra in 1992. I've been WI9WI since 1996.

There was not much time or space (small apartments) to operate in during med school in Madison, but I kept up the interest and even built an HW-8 which I still have. There then followed 4 years of anesthesiology residency, one in Philadelphia at Penn and 3 back in Madison at UW. The last couple of years of that I lived in a house and was able to put up some antennas including a few dipoles and a Butternut vertical and made a radio upgrade to a TS-520SE. Finally I could work some DX and do a little contesting again. After residency I worked at the University of Wisconsin until 2010 when I retired. I also worked at the Madison VA a day a week for 20 years (payback to the vets) and was the chief of the Anesthesia Service there for 6 years.

We moved to our present house in Madison in 1981 and for about 13 years I had a 50 ft tower with a tribander on it. That came down due to a house

remodeling (it would have been in the middle of the bathroom) in 1996. I now have a C-3S at 30 ft. on a Glen Martin tower on the roof, a low (30 ft) 135 ft OCF dipole for 80/40 and a very short (33 ft) top loaded vertical wire for 160. The vertical does work, I worked a half dozen Europeans in the 160 test this past weekend. Any antenna is better than no antenna at all. I also have a couple of small loops for receiving which are necessary on the low bands due to high noise levels from the university research park immediately behind our house.

Since 1984 we have owned a cottage on Barker Lake on 7 acres in Sawyer County in far northern Wisconsin. The first thing I did up there was dig by hand bases for a 52 ft crankup and 100 ft of Rohn 45. For many years I had monobanders for 40 through 10, a 2 element vertical array for 80, and a full sized inverted L and full sized dipole for 160. Due to various circumstances the big tower is down, and I now have the crankup with a C-19 and 5 element 6 meter antenna on it, a 4 square for 40 and dipoles and a vertical for 80/160. I also have 3 somewhat short beverages. The biggest advantage to the northland is rural noise levels are basically zero, compared to very high levels in Madison.

I restarted contesting in 1979 and have continued since without a break. My first foray out of the US was WPX SSB from VP5 in 1991. Since then I have operated from VP2E, KP2, KP4, J7, V31, PJ4, VP2M, C6A, and of course PJ2. Many of these were "suitcase" DXpeditions which I still enjoy. Most of my recent operating has been from PJ2T and J7, mostly with my friend K5KG, with a couple of suitcase dxpeds to V31 thrown in. My favorite contests are CW, with RTTY contests a second. I am not a big fan of SSB contests, although the first contest I operated from Signal Point was WPX SSB in 2001. I made well over 3000 QSOs and finished second in the SOABHP (TS) class. That was when the antennas consisted of John Thompson's tower with the CL33 on it and single element delta loops for 40 and 80. There was not a working radio on site, though there was a working AL1200. I brought my IC-706, not exactly a contest radio, and my own computer. It's amazing what a DX call and some power can do in spite of handicaps. I believe that this was the first serious single op effort from Signal Point.

My favorite contests these days are WPX CW which I've done many times from PJ2T, the CW sprints and the Wisconsin QSO party. My best finish was in 2012 when I won SOABLP, the most popular category, in WPX CW. I won the QRP category the following year. My wife Annette is KA9DOC, a ham since 1984 but a



recently minted Extra Class operator, and we have 2 daughters, Kathleen, who is a lawyer in solo private practice, and Cristin, who is a marine biologist at Scripps in Florida. Cristin does have an interest in radio but is very busy trying to get into a PhD program, so who knows where that will go.