



Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium
Editor: W0CG

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Newsletter News

It's been a year. Twelve newsletter issues have been produced, and this one begins a second year. The feedback has been good, and many of our members have commented on how surprised they are at how much is going on all the time, month by month, to enable us to do 599 9 when the contests come along.



Here's your newsletter editor in my home office in Idaho

Each month I tell myself to shorten these things, yet each month there is so much to report. I'll keep trying to downsize them. We can hope anyway....

NEWS FLASH: Fantastic Amplifier Donated to PJ2T

I've just received word that Jason Joens, NR0X, our professional climber, has decided to donate his Command Technologies HF-2500 amplifier to PJ2T!

This is one of the best amps ever made, and is the answer to my longstanding dream of a true full power amplifier for the station. This thing will loaf all day and all night at 1500 watts of output. Even better, it uses 3CX800A7 tubes, some of which we have in stock as spares.

Jason said I've wanted to find a way to give back to PJ2T ever since the first time you guys brought me down to help. It's a great amp and I'll miss it, but I would be proud to see it become a donation to the club. I'll have it ready to go in time for Dayton.

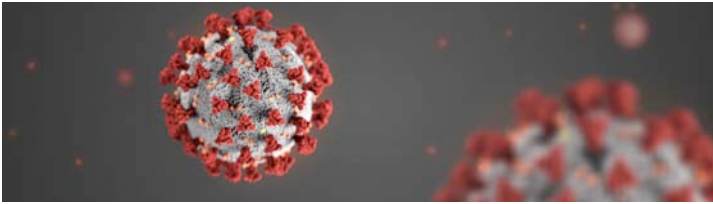


Command Technologies HF-2500 Amplifier

This is a dramatic, remarkable addition to PJ2T and we're extremely grateful to Jason for this.

COVID-19 Wrecks PJ2T Operations

The pandemic hurt PJ2T operations badly. KB7Q and Joyce wisely opted to leave Curacao on March 12, three weeks earlier than planned. Their concern was getting trapped overseas and not being promptly readmitted to the U.S. That meant that the WPX SSB contest operation planned by Egon (KF4DX) went down the drain as well as three weeks of hoped-for remote access to the station. It also lengthens the period of time that the QTH is unoccupied and therefore susceptible to a break-in. Fortunately, our rental car company is allowing me to carry forward the credit for these three unused weeks of the prepaid car rental.



KF4DX has very generously donated \$500 to help keep the club whole because we depend very heavily on revenue from our seven major annual contests to stay afloat, and this will help cut our losses. WI9WI has warned that his WPX CW trip in late May might not happen for the same reason. Hopefully next year's operational schedule will be back to normal.

ARRL DX CW Contest Report: World #1

Band	QSOs	Mults
160	800	56
80	1240	61
40	2100	62
20	2063	61
15	1509	59
10	368	38
8060		337 Total Score: 8,139,561

Here's the team that made the most QSOs in the world.



L-R: Jim (K9JF), Rudy (NF9V), Geoff (W0CG/PJ2DX), Gene (KB7Q), Bill (W9VA), Dan (W9DR), Jim (WI9WI), Tom (VE3CX)

This result is extremely gratifying after all of the hard work to make station improvements and keep the place in top operational condition. All of us in CCC can be very proud that we came out on top in this one. Photos follow later in the newsletter.

I particularly thank KB7Q for all of his work on the PCs, logging software, and log submission, and WI9WI for organizing the contest schedule and coaching the team.

Big, big thanks also to Dorothy who served as chef and to Annette Fitzpatrick who helped along with the other gals to keep us overfed and very happy. The biggest chore in the meal department is the grocery buying trips. Here are Annette and Dorothy rustling two carts full of stuff at Cost-U-Less. This is stressful because we have about \$1400 worth of food in the photo and have to beat it quickly to the house and get the stuff refrigerated before it melts or spoils.



KA9DOC and Dorothy at Cost-U-Less on contest Monday.

CQ 160 SSB Contest Report

Being a sane and well-adjusted person, Gene decided not to make any sort of serious effort in the torture of SSB on 160. KB7Q did give out our mult to a few of the deserving, with 63 QSOs, 21 states, 12 countries. His best DX was OK and F. A casual effort that reminded all of us why we love CW.

Geoff Bailed Out Early

Most years I have stayed at Signal Point until roughly April 7. But this year I bailed out on February 25, making a last minute decision to go home very early. This was triggered by the fact that Dorothy had to cancel more than half of her planned time in Curacao at the last minute because of work pressures. That would have left me on the island and away from her much, much longer than I felt I could handle. For 19 years I have been taking my partners to the airport and watching them fly away, leaving me alone for many weeks. This year something cracked, and I decided I had to go home early. Enormous thanks to Gene and Joyce for holding forth on the island in my absence. I'll be there next year for sure.

On the spur of the moment I decided to return to Idaho via Ohio and got to spend six days around my family. I see very, very little of my kids and grandkids because of the distances. It had been much too long, so my time

in Ohio rather than at Signal Point was really a treasure.



At my W0CG Ohio QTH with all three grandkids and my son and daughter-in-law.

ARRL DX SSB Contest Report

Band	QSOs	Mults	
160	390	49	
80	875	58	
40	2544	60	
20	2773	59	
15	2024	58	
10	16	2	
	8622	2867	Total Score: 7,389,954



Dan, N1ZZ, running 15 meter rate in ARRL DX SSB.

For the second year ARRL DX SSB was piloted by Pete, K8PGJ and N1ZZ's team from Florida's Platinum Coast Amateur Radio Society. KB7Q also provided some operating support in the late hours. They posted an excellent score of 7.4M, but did not succeed in outscoring our PJ2T CW guys at 8.1M. PJ4G was in the two transmitter category on Bonaire

and scored 8.3M on the SSB weekend. This is never quite our preference for our M/M to be outdone by a two transmitter, four operator team "next door," but our crew had a good time and ably represented PJ2T on the air. They will likely bring another World #1 Multi/Multi plaque to PJ2T.

Special thanks to KB7Q and Joyce for all of their work hosting this team, setting up and closing down the rental house, configuring the station, and providing tech support and operational coaching to the Florida crew.

Nobody sent me any photos, so I don't even have a team picture for the newsletter. Maybe next month?

CCC Financial Snapshot

W8WTS reports that the end of February balance in the treasury is \$3360.60.

Dayton PJ2T Contest Dinner Table

As I write this Visalia has just been cancelled. Let's hope the Hamvention survives. W9VA is putting together a CCC table for the Contest Dinner at Dayton. Thanks to Bill for his efforts in organizing this. I'll be there, and several others have also signed on. The speaker will be one of the Youth DX Adventure operators we hosted at Signal Point, so this year's dinner will be particularly fun. There may be one seat remaining. If you'd like to sign up, drop Bill a line w9va@aol.com.

Here's the gang at last year's contest dinner, that table organized by K2PLF.



Dayton Contest Dinner, PJ2T table, 2019. Thanks K2PLF.

CCC Golf Shirt Reorder

I am about to place an order for more of the CCC aqua green golf shirts. New members ND8L, N7WA, and K9DR will receive one free, and NA2U will get an XL free to correct my error on the original order. For all others, they will be \$26.00 + \$10.20 mailing costs for a total of \$36.20. Please let me know your preferred size and how many you would like. Your name and callsign will be embroidered beneath the CCC logo. I'm going to book the order at my local Idaho embroidery shop by the end of March.



CCC member KF4DX sporting the CCC shirt at Dayton last year, with Fred Hopengarten and Craig Clark.

CCC Beer Glasses: Celebrating Our 20th

Here's one of the commemorative glasses that arrived at my Idaho place on March 11. Mike Dinkelman, N7WA, a recent new CCC member took my challenge seriously about finding a way to celebrate 20 years of PJ2T. He designed this glass and worked with the vendor to have hundreds of these made, funding everything out of his pocket! In addition, many of you ordered glasses for yourselves on top of Mike's base order.



Our plan was to give these away at Visalia and Dayton. With Visalia now cancelled and the fate of the Hamvention still not known, we will need to find alternate ways to get them around. These will become collector's items and live in hams' shacks and kitchens at their basement man cave bars for many years to come. Thanks Mike!!

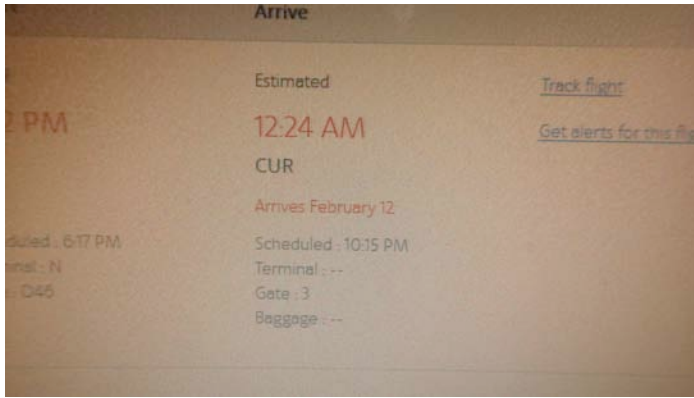
Thanks W9VA and VE3CX for Donations

A giant thanks to Bill and Tom who made very generous "overpayment" donations totaling about \$800 at the end of the ARRL DX CW contest in February. This is the kind of unexpected great generosity that makes it possible for us to construct and maintain such a top level world class station.

Tower Week Did Not Go As Hoped

After a couple years of planning we finally got Jason, NR0X, to the island for his first week of tower work as our professional outside maintenance lead. But Murphy came along with him, he caught a terrible case of flu, and spent most of the week in bed. The first sign of Murphy was that his flight arrived more than two

hours late, at 12:24 AM (below). Needless to say he and Holly were exhausted and had an understandably late start the next day.



Jason started by learning to mix and apply epoxy paint to an equalizer plate that we were planning to replace.



Next, he removed the rotor and badly corroded rotor plate from the WARC tower and took the US/JA rotor off the mast. He also managed to take down the 10 meter beam. But soon after he started having tremendously bad symptoms and was unable to do much else.

His temperature spiked very high and he spent most of contest Saturday having hallucinations and delirium. Thank goodness his YL Holly was here, and she was a wonderful and patient nurse. By Monday he was sufficiently improved that we were able to take him to the clinic in Barber. Thanks to WI9WI (an M.D.) for insisting to me that Jason needed to be seen before being allowed to fly. His blood oxygen level turned out to be good enough that Dr. Sommer released him for the trip, and he and Holly left the island as planned on Tuesday afternoon. After his return to Iowa he spent one day in the hospital, was eventually diagnosed with pneumonia, and required several weeks of recovery.

The club provided Jason \$2000 in advance for airfare, and the ARRL CW team absorbed his and Holly's

meal and lodging costs. These are significant costs, yet the reality is that very little of the planned work program got done. To make this right, our deal with Jason is that for the next trip we will pay roundtrip airfare for him, but that he will do everything else gratis for the week. It certainly was not in his plan to get sick, and he should not be penalized. This arrangement for the next trip is fair both to him and CCC long term.

Rebuild of Top 10 Meter Yagi

One of the items on the February work list for our tower professional was to fix a broken element tip on the top antenna of our 5 over 5 US/JA 10 meter stack. This is the element tip that I reported in November had fallen off and pierced the roof, creating a monster roof leak. Before Jason got sick with the flu he tackled taking down this antenna. That required some manhandling and shaking of the antenna to get it off the mount, and when he did that three additional elements broke in mid-air. It was literally aluminum rain.

Once he got the yagi down to the roof for inspection it was obvious that this antenna was much sicker than we realized. When I built this antenna, new out of the Cush Craft box in 2001 I carefully tightly taped over all of the element joints to keep salt off of the pipe straps. 18 years later it's clear that this tactic backfired and the tape wraps leaked ever so slightly and over time trapped salt which fed the aluminum oxidation process. Eventually, things began to break (photo).



Above you can see the point at which a 36 inch element tip broke off one of the driven elements, clearly as a result of salt-driven oxidation. I've removed the stainless pipe strap but you can see its shape imprinted on the element. The smaller broken tubing pieces were totally welded to the larger receiver pieces, and I had to do careful drilling and filing to prep the receivers for the new inserted tubing.

Investigating further it turned out that every one of the 20 such joints on this antenna were at or near failure, with oxidation so severe that in places the entire inner tube was filled with corrosive crud, as below.



What to do? It first appeared that I'd have to order tubing, ship it to the island, and totally rebuild all of the elements on this antenna on my next work trip south. The middle element tubes were extruded to a smaller diameter to accommodate the next piece of tubing, and almost 2 inches of each tapered section were destroyed.

But after some careful probing and experimenting with techniques, I developed a way to cut out all of the cancer, reverse the element tubes where possible, and replace others where necessary, and was able to rebuild 100% of the bad joints with tools and materials on hand. The following photo shows the work setup on the roof terrace. This required a ton of tools and technique and a full day and a half (February 22 and 23) working in very hot sun up there, but the antenna is now totally rebuilt, corrosion-free, and ready to go back up on the tower. I'm confident it will serve well for 20 more years at least. I used tubing left over from the rebuild and repair of a couple of the Europe tower antennas, had plenty of pipe straps on hand, and fortunately all of the needed drill bits in the proper sizes, thanks to N8LGP.



Prior photo, the rebuild location for the 10 meter yagi. (The blue tripod is for KB7Q's 432 MHz moonbounce antenna.)



The photo above shows a representative completed repair, with about 2 inches of cancerous swage cut off, a new element tip installed, slightly longer to make up for the lost two inches, a new stainless strap, and liberal Penetrox on everything to inhibit future corrosions. And, of course, no tape. These repairs changed the taper schedule of the elements slightly, but not enough to hurt, and once I get it on the tram line and on an antenna analyzer I'll tweak the elements before final reinstallation.

WARC Rotator Finally Works!

I hate rotors. When I designed the station in 2000 I minimized the number of rotors. Zero would have been best, but we ended up needing three of them: one for the 40 yagi, one for the multiplier tribander, and one for WARC. For years all three of these have been inop. Then, finally, we got the 40 turning with the replacement of the tower (and mast bearings), the multiplier turning with a new mast and rotor, leaving only the lowly WARC antenna still stuck. For years.

The WARC problem was very tough because that tower has a custom-made PJ9JT aluminum rotor plate that was severely corroded. Worse, the bolts holding the WARC rotor to that plate were fused by corrosion and would have to be removed and destroyed with a power grinder. Further, that rotor required manual eight-wire spade lug wiring because the unique design of the old rotor plate did not permit use of a quick-disconnect to the rotor. The plate could not be replaced with a standard available plate because it was customized to this weird aluminum tower. So we were stuck.

Several years ago I carefully made a cardboard template to guide fabrication of an aluminum stiffener plate to add to the corroded plate so as to get more

years of service out of it. I then used Dorothy's machine shop in Idaho (Yes, she had a drill press, brake, and all the goodies) to make the stiffener from scrap aluminum that I bought at a yard in Coeur d Alene. The stiffener is a very odd, irregular shape that fits around all of the custom PJ9JT brackets and workarounds I have installed over the years to keep this tower safe and serviceable. Jason was able to grind off the rotor hardware and take down the plate on his first day before he was disabled by sickness. The photo shows that old rotor plate (upside down) and the custom stiffener to its right. You can see that this thing is totally non-standard, and that the holes in the plate for the rotor bolts were tremendously enlarged by corrosion.



Jason removing the WARC rotor with an angle grinder and a lot of sparks.



Old rotor plate and the W0CG custom stiffener before they were bolted together.



VE3CX and W0CG mating the stiffener to the old rotor plate with six sets of stainless screws, washers, and fiber nuts.

The next photo shows the stiffened plate, this time right side up. There needed to be about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of clearance between the plate and the rotor body for the wiring. To accomplish that I epoxied eight oversize stainless nuts and four oversize washers to the plate. This worked out great.



Rebuilt WARC rotor plate, ready for installation.

That night, Jason installed the beefed up rotor plate on the tower, put in the rotor, and connected the eight wire cable using the light from his helmet. For the first time in many years we had three functioning rotators!

Murphy arrived soon, though, and on the third day the WARC rotor died again. Possibly there is a bad splice in the wiring, but I was out of time for this trip. This is not a major worry, because swapping in a new rotor will be very straightforward now that the new plate is in place. The top of this tower is now in vastly better condition and should serve us well for years and years. Dorothy took the old WARC rotor back to Idaho and I'll send it out for rebuild in March.

KB7Q EME Accomplishments !!



KB7Q is one of the most operationally versatile and technically capable members of CCC. One of his many interests within the hobby is EME. In February he hauled his EME gear to Curacao and set up on the roof terrace, as pictured. This time instead of 6 meters he targeted 432 MHz. Astonishingly, he managed 50 FT8 EME QSOs. This is a fabulous accomplishment from a small portable setup, and he made us all look good by signing PJ2T for these contacts.

Stations worked: DL9KR (CW 529), UA3PTW (-20), DL5FN (-25), OH2DG (-23), OK1KIR (-28), UT6UG (-24), UT5DL (-22), HB9Q (-14), UX5UL (-27), LZ1DX (-19), ES3RF (-29), K5DOG (-23), XE2AT (-25), DL7APV (-8), SM7THS (-25), K2UYH (-25), VK4EME (-28), VE6TA (-26), ZS4TX (-27), ZS6JON (-27), DL8GP (-30), G4RGK (-25), ON4AOI (-28), DF3RU (-14), G4FUF (-27), PA0BAT (-27), G4EZP (-26), PA2V (-23), UX0FF (-26), JA6AHB (-25), DF3RU (-22), UR7DWW (-27), W2HRO (-28), PA9R (-23), YL2GD (-28), ZL3AAD (-28), DK3WG (-25), DF3RU (-28), G4YTL (-26), W5LUA (-24), DL8DAU (-21), OH6UW (-26), DL6SH (-19), DK0NHF (-26), DK5SO (-25), DL8FBD (-30), DG5CST (-29), DK4RC (-26), UB4UAA (-25), W7MEM (-23).

More Radiotourists Visit PJ2T

Signal Point is a tourist destination. During the ARRL SSB weekend three separate sets of European visitors showed up at the station to see the famous QTH. Gene hosted visitors from DL, PA, and ON.

PJ2T Tech Notes from KB7Q

All our Dell OptiPlex 7040 computers have been upgraded to Windows 10, and the four we're currently using have had ample RAM memory added this week. The 'puter at position #1 has 24Gb, and the rest 16Gb.

The K3 radios all have the latest firmware, and the replacement Digital Voice Recorders have been installed in four radios. We're halfway thru the ARRL DX SSB contest as I write this without any issues with the new modules. Yippee!

I brought some N connector sockets that mount on our Coaxial Dynamic wattmeter for use with my 70cm moonbounce operation out on the west porch. Those connectors will be donated to the club and remain in the meter case.

Signal Point Jan – Feb Real Estate Maintenance Summary

I bet you never look up at the inside of the roof of the Ocean Pavilion. It's beautifully stained and varnished wood, but it takes work to keep it that way. The outside part needed very badly to be re-done because of salt spray and discoloration. I hand scrubbed it with bleach water then put on a new coat of varnish on February 1 and 2. This is tricky because it requires careful use of dropcloths to protect the tile, and this is challenging in the wind. Also one has to stand on the concrete railing, lean out with one arm, and try not to fall into the ocean.

As the next two photos show, it was a beautiful outcome that will keep things looking good for about four more years. (The spar varnish on Curacao is about \$125/gallon!)



Fresh varnish on the underside of the pavilion, oceanside.



Revarnished front gate, good for another nine months.



Old shower curtains and lots of rocks make for effective dropcloths.

The front road and side gates are made from mahogany. This is tough wood, but even mahogany will rot in the tropics without lots of care. These gates get direct sun exposure most all of each day, so they need to be varnished at least once a year.

The challenge here is that as soon as the sun hits the wet varnish, it bubbles badly. And wind blows grass fragments onto the work, tacked on there permanently by the sticky varnish. Thus the technique is to varnish at night under the lights. I scrubbed and prepped the wood the day before. Then I started varnishing at 2:15 AM on February 7, working with a desk lamp and extension cord. About three and a half hours later it was finished, the varnish cured nicely before the sun could ruin it, and the light nighttime breezes were not enough to blow the grass around. Sounds crazy, but the wee hours are perfect for this job. The following photo shows the nice result.

The wicker furniture for the East Porch was in horrible condition and about to be thrown away. The wood had gone pale, there were scratches and white marks all over it from careless handling going in and out of the house, the cushions were covered with bird droppings, parts of the decorative wood were broken, and the seat webbing and elastic were totally destroyed by heat and time, dropping sitters onto the floor.

Dorothy intervened. She cleaned the cushions and then hand sanded all of the rounds, removing the white scratches. Then she reglued broken parts and spent a day hand-staining everything all over. It looked like new after everything dried!

Next day we went to Ackerman fabrics in town and bought 19 linear meters of tough seat webbing and some fabric to remake seat covers, and stopped on the way home to get a quality commercial stapler and pack of staples.

Over the next two days, she patiently removed hundreds of old staples and installed the new webbing (below), capping it all off by sewing and stapling on new webbing covers that she made from scratch.



Wrestling out hundreds of old staples to remove the failed seat webbing.



Bottom of the rebuilt love seat with new webbing and covering fabric installed.



Dorothy's last day, just a couple of hours before I took her to the airport, and she opted to fix some paint damage in the kitchen cabinets.



The master furniture rebuilder, after three full days of work, showing off the renewed and now SAFE furniture. She's a miracle worker.

I like plants, but plants don't like the windswept, sun-drenched, salt-soaked front yard. Nonetheless I doggedly keep trying. We bought three new plants and I put them in the ground (below), then reconnected all the irrigation lines. These trees will surely die, but I hope they die slowly enough that we can enjoy them for a couple of years.



Temporary fix for irrigation problem.



W0CG with my favorite pickaxe, digging a hole for my latest attempt at palm tree horticulture.

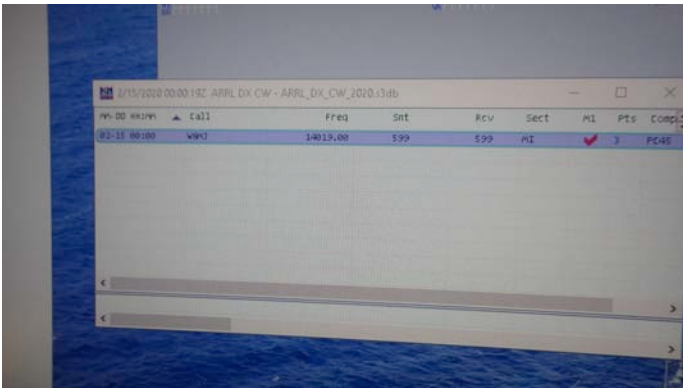
ARRL DX CW 2020 in Photos



Rudy's team shirt in midflight from W9VA. Bill generously provided tees for the entire team again this year.



Dinner just prior to the contest. This unlikely looking bunch of reprobates were about to hit the rigs and make more QSOs than any other station in the world. (KB7Q is at the children's table in the chair in the distance.)



Rudy started us off with W8MJ (MI) on 20.



K9JF early in the contest with excellent rates on 160.



VE3CX in Hour 1 on 80, enjoying the Beverages and excellent band conditions. He's using our newest AL-1200, donated by W3KHZ (SK) through K2PLF.



KB7Q in his usual opening position on 40. He made his lifetime best CW rate (217) in the third hour.



2 AM local time Saturday morning, after a shift

change. K9DR on 160 in the back, W9VA running great rates on 80, and WI9WI doing the same on 40. There were 2037 QSOs in the log already.



The long tradition – I'm making the contest chili Saturday morning.



Not as good as breakfast in bed, but here's WI9WI having eggs and OJ served at the 40 position early Sunday morning.



Mid-afternoon Saturday. Rudy is running hard and fast on 20.



Saturday morning and K9DR is trying to tell me that he's as cute as Elaine, our Styrofoam remote operator. You be the judge.



Graveyard time at 3:15 AM Sunday, NF9V on 160, K9DR running 80, W9VA on 40. Every QSO counts, even in these slow periods. ~6200 QSOs made by now.



The final minutes of the contest and KB7Q is showing us that running world-class rates on 20 need not appear to be very taxing.

Band	QSOs	Pts	Sec	Pt/Q
1.8	800	2382	56	3.0
3.5	1240	3714	61	3.0
7	2100	6252	62	3.0
14	2063	6177	61	3.0
21	1509	4524	59	3.0
28	368	1104	38	3.0
Total	8080	24153	337	3.0
Score: 8,139,561				
1 Mult = 24.0 Q's				

It's over, and we scored almost a million more points than last year thanks to a 10 meter opening on Sunday, most of which I got to work.



Thanks to Annette I got to be in the beer photo. L-R: K9DR, W19WI, KB7Q, K9JF, NF9V, W0CG/PJ2DX, VE3CX, W9VA. My hat is off to this team that was the top shack in the entire world this weekend. What a thrill.



Dorothy was the Chief Chef (center) but she had wonderful help from Annette (left) and Joyce (right) and from Shirley, out of this frame. We ate very, very well and put on pounds.



Without the gals we are nothing. Here's the entire PJ2T ARRL CW 2020 team. L-R: W19WI, W0CG, Joyce (KB7Q's XYL), KB7Q, Dorothy (W0CG's YL), K9DR, Shirley (K9JF's XYL and W7SHF), NF9V, K9JF, VE3CX, Annette (W19WI's XYL and KA9DOC), W9VA.

Subjective Report on the Performance of the US/JA Beverages

For ARRL DX CW we had two US/JA Beverages, the new one on the Ridge and a temporarily installed one in the flats in the old location. K8ND and W8WTS reported that in the 160 CW contest each had value, as one can never have too many RX antennas on 160. But the ARRL team decided after a weekend of experimentation with both antennas that they much preferred the new one on the Ridge. The "Lower" antenna is "brighter," signals are louder, but there is a tremendous amount of background noise. On the Ridge signals are not as strong, but that antenna is dead quiet, making it more effective. Also, we found after much button-pushing that the Ridge antenna seemed to reject Europe slightly better.



Location of the temporary "Lower" US/JA Beverage.

In late February we observed several instances of officials from the hotel bringing around potential investors and running afoul of our wire, twanging it and pointing around curiously. Thus, I opted to bring it indoors. That antenna, including its termination and feed transformer, is carefully coiled up on a reel in a

closet and can easily be redeployed if needed. Meanwhile, it's safe indoors.

Thanks to K0MD for More PJ2T "NCJ" Exposure

CCC member and "NCJ" Editor Dr. Scott Wright, K0MD, was kind enough to print a complimentary article about us written by Roberto Ramierz, CE3CT.

Roberto was with us for CQWW SSB last October, and was a total delight to operate and make friends with. We appreciate his generous comments in "NCJ" and hope he'll return to Curacao many times again.

RX Splitters Are Being Rebuilt, by K8ND

As you can read below, we encountered a serious problem with one of the KB-4 antenna splitters mounted on the wall at the antenna feed bulkhead during the 160 CW contest. We have been using these splitters since I brought them down in 2003 or 2004.

Opening it, we found the transformer inside a far-less-than-optimum way to split antennas, as there is no isolation between the ports.

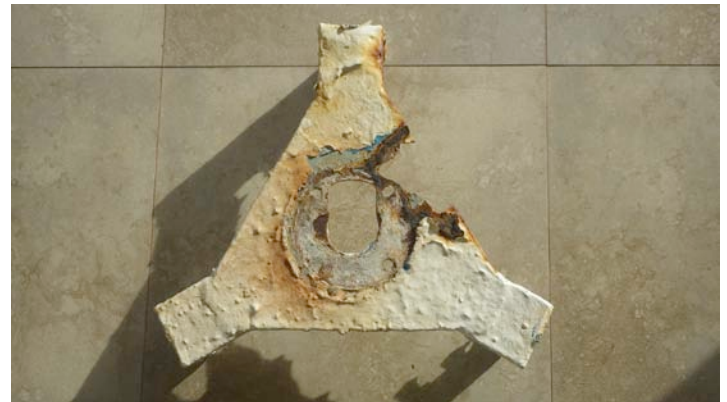
Jim W8WTS has taken home the one that gave us problems, and will test it and characterize what he finds. Then he will replace the transformer inside with a Magic-T splitter in the same box, and will test and characterize that one as well. He will make 'retrofit kits' for the other KB-4 splitters here. The retrofit will be simple, as there are just the three connections to the SO-239 connections of the box to be unsoldered to remove the old transformer and re-soldered with the new Magic-T parts.

For the interim, the KB-4 splitting the Ridge US Beverage has been replaced (photo below) with a KD9SV Magic-T splitter from the CW Skimmer suitcase. There are several more in there should they be needed.



Stainless Rotor Plate Installed

For several years I've wanted to replace the rotor plate in the US/JA tower. It was so bad that I had to cut off all six U-bolts with a grinder, and the next photo shows why it needed to go, eaten away by rust.



US/JA rotor plate after being removed from service.

We were so impressed with the new DX Engineering rotor plates we used in the Europe tower project in 2018 that I bought another one, and Dorothy hauled it down from Idaho in checked luggage. The new one is cleverly designed to flexibly fit in many sizes of tower. It's 100% stainless steel and hardware and very, very thick and strong.

After removing the old plate I cleaned the corrosion and paint from the legs with an angle grinder and wire wheel. The next day I put on a coat of epoxy primer, the day after that a coat of white epoxy finish paint, and then finally the rotor plate itself the day following.



It was doggoned tricky to do this myself in the howling wind (Jason was down with the flu), but I managed to install this new plate and reinstall and connect the rotor during the contest Sunday morning, losing only one hat in the process. Here's a view from below. It's a beautiful new installation that will last many years. Unfortunately the mast lock U-bolt spalled, and I was not able to get it down after replacing the rotor and plate. This will require a grinder on my next trip to the island.



View of the new rotor plate from above, showing the thick material, stainless hardware, and nicely-protected and rehabilitated tower legs.

Rotor Roundup: PJ2T Needs Tailtwisters

We need Tailtwisters. We have 10 rotors, one of which is on long term loan at the VERONA PJ2A station. Four of the remaining nine rotors are inop. Of the remaining five, three are in service on our towers and that leaves only two spares, both lightweight Ham-III types.

Even though our rotors are lightly loaded, the extreme relentless Curacao tradewinds beat our rotors badly. Most of the time the winds impose so much torque that the antennas won't turn. T2X Tailtwisters do better than most in this severe environment. WI9WI may have a rotor or two at his north QTH. Does anyone else have any T2Xs, working or not, that you could contribute to our efforts?

New DVK Boards Installed in All K3s

For a couple of years the DVRs in our K3s have been flaky, working for awhile and then forgetting their programming and hanging. K8PGJ donated all of these, and it was Pete who pressed Elecraft relentlessly to admit that there was a problem and finally fix it.

KB7Q painstakingly installed the four latest version DVR modules from Elecraft via Pete. This is a painstaking process (below).



KB7Q had the RMA paperwork work, and the old modules, and handed them off to K8PGJ last week to be returned to Elecraft. The new DVRs performed flawlessly in ARRL DX SSB.

The Construction Assault Continues



W0CG on February 21 with a construction-destroyed phone pole and our phone line hanging two feet off the ground at the site of the old hotel.

Member Spotlight: Gene Shea, KB7Q



KB7Q

Like most folks that grew up in the 50's and 60's my fascination with ham radio started in my early teens. I discovered a short wave radio my parents had stored in the attic and spent hours listening to regular guys chatting back and forth with funny alpha-numeric names. After passing the Novice test in 1960, my father took a day off from work to drive me into New York City so I could sit for my general class exam - I became K1QNE.

I had a low 40 meter dipole, a Globe Chief Deluxe (2x 807), and a Drake 2B receiver and had a ball noodling around on 40M CW. I drifted away from ham radio to race karts and motorcycles, but later as I started my teaching careers and had settled down a bit I took myself to New York City tested for the advanced ticket and changed my call to KA1EA in the mid-70's. After

