



# Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium  
Editor: W0CG

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April 15, 2020

## CCC Annual Meeting Is Coming Up Online

We'll meet online this year. For now, hold these dates and times:

DRY RUN DRESS REHEARSAL

Thursday May 14 at 6:00pm Eastern Time

ANNUAL MEETING

Friday May 15 at 6:00pm Eastern Time

Details to follow. Please plan on "attending."

## Curacao COVID-19 Update

Curacao's government locked down the island beginning March 16. As of this writing, there are 14 confirmed cases on the island, 7 of whom have recovered. The mortality count remains at one. Sunday, March 22 was the last American Airlines flight out, and all flights to and from Curacao are cancelled indefinitely. Here's the gist of the rules as summarized by the Curacao government.



1. *Incoming flights:* - All commercial flights are canceled. Exceptions are some authorized specialists, freight and medical services between the sister islands. All returning residents are obliged to spend 14 days in quarantine

2. *Flights leaving:* all flights cancelled.

3. *Maritime traffic:* - All maritime traffic is prohibited to enter the country with the exception of certain cases

*such as the transportation of fuel, ships for repair, freight, etc. The local authorities have been informed of this list.*

4. *All public, social, cultural, sport, and religious activities are cancelled till further notice. All permits for events that have previously been issued are hereby recalled.*

5. *Work as much as possible from home, under the condition that this is in consultation with the direct head of department.*

6. *Everyone must stay home as much as possible with the exception of and maintaining the 2-meter distance rule for:*

- People in critical functions
- Shopping for food at supermarkets
- Going to the bank and insurance companies
- Visiting propane gas refill stations
- Walking in nature
- Going to the beach
- Visiting gas stations
- Visiting drug stores
- Operating single operator radio contests

*Schools, universities and child day-care facilities are closed.*

7. *Restaurants and snack bars are requested to make food delivery or attend clients on a basis of take-out and leave. If this is not possible then the business must remain closed.*

8. *Visiting senior care homes is not allowed until further notice.*

9. When using Public transportation please adhere to the 2 meter distance rule and the rules for hygiene.

Since the above was written a nighttime island-wide no exceptions curfew was instituted, and I have heard that on some days that has been extended to 24 hours daily. These strict rules are working well, but it is much too soon to speculate about when they will be relaxed.

### Contest Plans for Fall 2020

**CQWW SSB:** Last season we had a top-level SSB team that scored extremely well, placing 4<sup>th</sup> world and 2<sup>nd</sup> in our hemisphere. Several of those ops have already committed to return in 2020 including ND8L and VE4GV. W3ACO has also signed on with us, and VE3CX and CE3CT are working on the possibilities. With both ND8L and W3ACO we have the happy (and most unusual) situation of two superb chefs on the team. I have the Moran pool house rented so there are sleeping spaces for nine ops. Can you come? As usual, the planning detail for this contest is available online:

<http://www.pj2t.org/ccc/cqww.ssb.2020.preplanning.htm>



**CQWW CW 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event:** This contest will celebrate the exact 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our first ever contest from PJ2T. The photo shows Jim Livengood, then KP2L and now W0NB, at the multiplier station in November 2000.



KP2L, Jim, November 2000

Thus far N7IR, VE3CX, K9DR, N5OT+Kathy, NA2U, W9NJY, and W0CG+Dorothy have signed up for the anniversary operation. That leaves beds for two more operators traveling alone plus one more operator with XYL. If we have more interest than that we'll rent additional sleeping space. This will be an exciting, fun

time. The preplanning link is

<http://www.pj2t.org/ccc/cqww.cw.2020.preplanning.htm>

### CCC Financial Snapshot

Per W8WTS the end of March balance was \$4115.66

### Wonderful Donation from N7IR

We just received the unexpected great news that Gary, N7IR, PJ2T's Station Equipment Lead, has bought and donated an Autek WM-1 wattmeter to PJ2T. These things are increasingly hard to find, and we rely heavily on them at the station, so this is a wonderful surprise. He's going to calibrate it using his Bird wattmeter and then we'll figure out who can take it to the station.



Donated WM-1 wattmeter from N7IR

### QTH Now in Secure Deep Lockdown

With all of the cancellations because of COVID-19, the QTH is now prematurely in a long period of lockdown which began March 12. Normally this does not happen until mid-April. As we enter this long period of dormancy, the QTH is much more secure than it has ever been, and I'm sleeping much better.



East Bedroom security “system”

One major component of that security is the giant mountain of outdoor furniture (photo) that KB7Q and Joyce stacked in the East Bedroom. It takes a good half hour for a bad guy to remove these items from the bedroom.

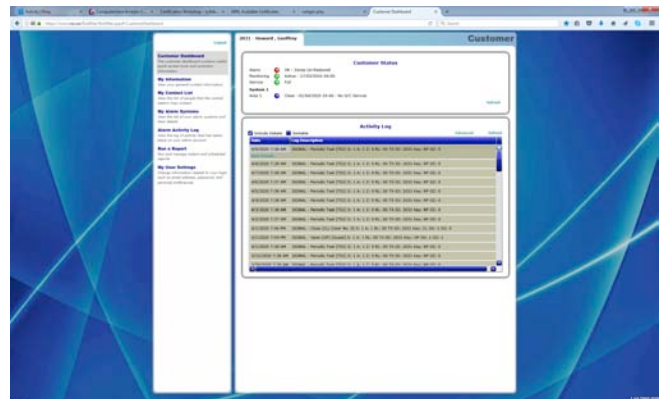
A second very important security element is our new safe. Four K3s and several of our newest Dell Optiplex PC systems are in there, and the safe itself is well-hidden in a closet and bolted to the concrete floor. This safe hideaway will prevent any of our PCs from catching the coronavirus.

Third, the new Ring security cameras are proving to be invaluable. They keep 24/7 watch on five of our six sets of sliding glass doors, and alert me whenever they detect motion. At night a bright light turns on. The video clip is automatically recorded and stored to the cloud. I can hear the audio, talk through the camera in real time, and also can trigger a siren. These things run on solar power so are immune to commercial power outages. When Aqualetra power is down the videos are stored in the cams and uploaded as soon as things come back to normal. I’ll install three more of these cameras on my next trip to the island. I’m funding all of this from the house account – not from the PJ2T treasury. Here (next column) is the live image from the camera on the West Porch at about 5:30 PM on April 9.



Ring security camera live view, April 9

A fourth component of our security is, as always, the conventional security system that is monitored 24/7 by Curacao Surveillance Services. I can see every entry in that system’s log online, and their monitoring service is extremely diligent. It was the siren from this system that scared off the bad guys on September 27 when a break-in was attempted. Our telephone entry cable is hardened to help keep this system online, and it reverts to battery power in AC power outages. The photo below shows my online view of the Signal Point security system log from Curacao Surveillance Systems. A special shout out to our friend Jean-Claude, PJ2BVU, CTO of CSS, who keeps all of this technology working at the vendor.



View of online security system log from Signal Point

Fifth, I installed much better quality padlocks in October, and we had steel lock covers welded on the four security gates. These shrouds make it all but impossible to cut off a lock.

### Updated News from the Neighborhood HOA

Some months ago I reported that the failure of Girobank had caused our HOA, the Coral Cliff Title Foundation, to lose NAfl 8000. That was half of the money we had on deposit there. Word arrived today that Girobank has been re-funded and reopened under close government supervision, and that our full original balance is once again available. With the bank viable again, the CCTF has just billed all of owners for

annual dues, NAfl 600. I immediately sent that transfer to the HOA account.

The recovery of our lost money is great news, and it will help pay for completion of the access gate to the neighborhood, now projected to be in service by the end of April. Each homeowner will have a remote control for the gate. For others, there will be a red pushbutton that will open the gate from the outside, requiring the driver to get out of his vehicle. At that time, his photo and vehicle information will be stored in the cloud. Exit will require entering a code furnished by whichever homeowner he was visiting, and the egress will also be recorded. A sign will be installed in three languages at the entry point:

Press red button to open gate  
No exit without special code  
Video recordings are made



Access gate in its retracted position.

In addition, plans are being made to repair the dangerous ocean access steps and handrail between houses 4 and 5, which will be funded by the CCTF treasury.

Our neighborhood HOA has decided to split organizationally from the owners of the homes on the access road above the hotel site. They are very militant, threatening lawsuits against the developers of the hotel, and have been confrontational in meetings with them. Our interests at our end of the road differ, and CCTF will deal with the developers in a mood of courteous negotiation, avoiding the potential pitfalls of direct warfare.

Officers of CCTF include Dirk van Daam, our across the street neighbor and the only person who lives in the neighborhood all year around. He's Chairman. Our Treasurer is Mike Maley, our Illinois-based next door neighbor to the east. Albert Koers serves at Secretary. Albert is a highly accomplished Dutch lawyer, well-connected on the island, very erudite, and an outstanding asset to our neighborhood homeowners' association.

## Contest Certificates Online

If you'd like to add wallpaper in your shack, contest certificates for PJ2T are available on-line going back as far as 1998. See the links below for ARRL and CQ contests.

<http://contests.arrl.org/certificates.php>

<http://www.cqww.com/results.htm>

## Special Thanks to KF4DX



Egon Behle, KF4DX, DK8FZ

COVID-19 ruined Egon's plans to run WPX SSB as a single operator at PJ2T. Even though he cancelled his trip, he very generously donated \$500 to partly offset the lost club revenue. The costs of the Curacao house and support of the station continue whether anyone is using it or not. Egon's gift will help us stay afloat. We're anything but a profit-seeking club group, but the reality is that what we do does require some funds. Hopefully some form of normalcy will have returned when it is time for the October resumption of the contest season.

## Nice PJ2T Video from PD0ILD

On Friday, March 6, just prior to ARRL SSB, Harry Wille, PD0ILD visited Signal Point and made this video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtVSIInPBhzA>

At the time of Harry's visit Pete and Gene were busy making final preparations for the contest, and the rest of the crew was resting up for the weekend.

### **PJ2T Golf Shirts Are Delayed**

My local embroidery shop is closed because of the COVID-19 shutdown order from the State of Idaho. I have the blank shirts here now via Amazon, and will get them to the embroiderer as soon as they reopen. Here are the shirts that will be made. (Please don't ask to add to this order because I can't get any more blanks from Amazon for several weeks.)

K9DR XL; N7WA XL; NA2U XL; K8IV XXL (2); NR0X XXL; WA9S L; Dorothy M.

### **KB7Q's 432 MHz EME Skyhook**

You saw the list of Gene's amazing 50 QSOs in last month's newsletter. Here's another photo of the antenna that did the job, all airline checked-baggage compatible.



KB7Q and his 432 MHz EME antenna

### **W0CG Maintenance Trip Upcoming in June**

Who knows if the pandemic will permit this, but I have tickets to go to Curacao June 3 – 17. This will give me 12 full days on the island to work on the projects that did not get done because of my early departure in February. I grabbed an incredibly cheap round trip fare of \$670 round trip from Idaho. This is just slightly more than half what we usually pay from the Pacific Northwest, and this was prior to the onset of the COVID-19 crisis! I'm taking advantage of the deal available to all CCC members for a 50% subsidy of my flight and vehicle costs for a trip to the QTH solely to work on house and station projects.

Here's the partial project list. Reinstall the blue tile in the East Bedroom; build a three foot high concrete sarcophagus around the WARC tower base; repair numerous bad 160 L radials; replace the equalizer plate on the US tower ocean guy; retune the 3 el 80 correctly; install and configure three additional Ring security cameras; cut off the seized hardware that's

preventing the US mast from rotating (DXE mast lock); troubleshoot the new WARC rotor; remove tree branches that are in contact with a Europe Tower guy; clean and repaint rust spots on top section of US/JA tower; install cable extension so that 15 meter antenna system box reaches all stations; routine periodic exterior painting of house. I won't get all of that done in 12 days, but those are the most immediate needs.

### **Ancient November 2000 Photos**

With our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary coming soon, here are some photos from 20 years back to provide some perspective on how far we've come with the station and house.



Here I am with KP2L installing some of the initial copper tubing that was needed to get a laundry operation going. There had never been a washer at the house, so we had to cut into the existing metric plumbing and figure a way to connect the U.S. standard copper tubing and fittings I had brought in my suitcase. Some days later our Maytag washer was delivered, and we celebrated the first ever load of laundry at Signal Point. We had to do everything ourselves to keep the budget on track. Incredibly, that washing machine still works fine.



Noel, W9EFL (SK)

That's Noel, W9EFL (SK) on the prior page putting the first of many spray primer coats inside the kitchen cabinets. The stench in the house was terrible, even after lots of scrubbing with bleach. Note in the photo that we have tossed the old useless gas range and have not yet gotten a new one.



K4LT (now AD8CW) is running some of our first pileups from the house while I hold the video camera. He's using the IC-765 that we hauled down, barefoot, at the original PJ9JT plywood operating desk. (The amplifier on the desk was inop.) I bought the monitor second hand on the island and hauled down a PC in my luggage. Doug worked like a dog on the early house renovations but missed the contest because he needed to be home for Thanksgiving.



K4LT cranking up the PJ9JT aluminum tower. The support base was in very poor condition, so we cranked it up very carefully, nerves on alert. Once it was up we decided it would be impossible to ever crank it up or down again, and soon added guys to this formerly self-supporting tower. Notice that this is well before the white perimeter wall was built.



W0CG with a very flat, very dead rat that I found behind the old refrigerator. Both the rat and the fridge were promptly thrown away.

### **30 Year Wisconsin County Project Completed: Comments from WI9WI**

Jim's recent report on his operation in the March Wisconsin QSO Party included these comments. Congrats to Jim, what persistence.



*My major goal this year was to complete my very long term goal of operating the WIQP solo mobile (no driver) from all 72 Wisconsin counties. This was a project that actually started in the 1980s when I mostly operated from home in Madison or from our cabin in Sawyer County. On a couple of occasions I left the cabin early and made a few mobile QSOs on the way home, mainly in RUS, CHI and EAU. In 1994 I decided to do something different and started running a few northern counties. A few years later I got tired of doing the same counties over and over and decided to go for them all.*

*So this year I finally completed what amounted to an over 30 year project. The WIQP is only 7 hours long and I discovered early on that I didn't feel safe operating and driving at the same time. So a lot of my time has been spent moving between counties without making QSOs. This year I left home about 0900 local and drove up to MRN. Over the next 7 hours I ran*

MRN, OCO, MEN (quite rare), OUT and WIN to finish them all off. Total actual operating time was 03:24, with the remaining 03:26 spent driving and fixing problems. I got home at 2220 local, so of the 13 plus hours on the road, only a bit over 3 hours was spent actually operating.

**Photos from ARRL DX SSB 2020 de N1ZZ**



The team: AD4ES, WB5ZGA, N1ZZ, AF4Z, KE3VV, K4QD. Missing: K8PGJ, KB7Q.



K4QD, Jan, working the 20 meter station



Dave, KE3VV



Don, AF4Z, running contest on 20 meters: Back Pete, K8PGJ running 40 meters



Chuck, AD4ES answering a 20 M contest call. Back: Dan, N1ZZ entering a 40m Q



**PJ2T Antenna Stories: 5 el US/JA 20**

The photo on the next page is the 10 Meter System box, but the 20 is just the same. When you push the “US/JA” button on the 20 Meter System box you get a fantastically effective optimized Hy-Gain 205-CAS yagi fixed at an azimuth of 330 degrees. It’s about 67 feet up on the US/JA tower, making its effective height above salt water 103 feet.



Push the “US/JA” button on the 20 Meter System box to get the Hy-Gain 5 element beam.

Our PJ2T US/JA 20 antenna started life at W0CG in October of 1988 as a Hy-Gain 205-BAS. I was excited beyond words when the ABF Freight semi pulled up at the end of my driveway and delivered my first ever yagi. I had waited 25 years to own a beam. It came in a wooden crate, making it seem even more official. I excitedly built that antenna and installed it at the top of my first tower, 120 feet of Rohn 45. The performance was incomprehensible from my eight acre Ohio hilltop, and I was in seventh heaven, finally getting a beam in my 26<sup>th</sup> year of ham radio.

In time I got greedy and wanted better, and bought one of the first LTA monster 20 monobanders. After five years of great service the Hy-Gain came down. It “rested” in a field in Ohio until the PJ2T adventure began and I decided to ship that antenna to Curacao. In the Fall of 2000 Steve, N8LGP very generously volunteered to take on the challenge of converting it to an optimized “CAS” and prepping this (and all the other) antennas for shipment to Curacao. Below is that monster 48 foot boom LTA yagi for 20 going back up after repairs, July 23, 2005.



Preparing to hang the 48 foot LTA yagi on the tram at W0CG, July 23, 2005. K8MFO and W8AV at the right.

The first step was to put the old 205-BAS antenna on a pole in my Ohio front yard and figure out what would be needed to make it better than new. The photo shows it in my yard in October 2000.



W0CG’s 205-BAS in Ohio, October 2000

Next, it had to be disassembled. Here in the next photo is Steve doing that in my yard.



N8LGP at W0CG, October 2000

We hauled the 20 meter beam to his house in pieces on top of his too small car, and Steve worked for months over the winter making the antenna better than new. Steve’s a professional machinist and knows how to do things right. Once the antenna was ready he labeled it carefully, tore it down for shipment, wrapped it and others in discarded bed sheets, and that antenna pile sat on his bedroom floor until May of 2001. Amazingly, his XYL Dee kept him around in spite all of this.

This 20 meter beam and an entire container of other PJ2T assets was shipped to the island in April of 2001 and we put the antenna on the tower later that summer. We fed it with Heliac from the start, and the



performance was incredible. In all of the intervening years we have only had to take it down once for repairs.

I suspect that corrosion will soon cause this antenna to start dropping element tips, but thanks to WI9WI and N5OT we have plenty of spare Hy-Gain parts on hand at Signal Point, and repairs will be straightforward.

This antenna is best in the afternoons when arrival angles from the US are fairly high. At dusk and dawn, and sometimes for JA, the Force 12 multiplier tribander is slightly better because it's higher.

This is now the 32<sup>nd</sup> year that this 5 element yagi has been making QSOs, starting life in Ohio at my place, and it is far from done!

### About Global Entry

Global Entry is one of several Department of Homeland Security trusted traveler programs. As I'm sure you've all witnessed at Miami, Global Entry enables travelers to zoom past sometimes giant lines at the emigration kiosks to get processed into the country with incredible speed. Several of our CCC members have it. It's \$100 for a five year period and requires a personal interview in connection with your initial application. You can go to <https://tpe.cbp.dhs.gov> to learn how to apply for this and other trusted traveler programs.

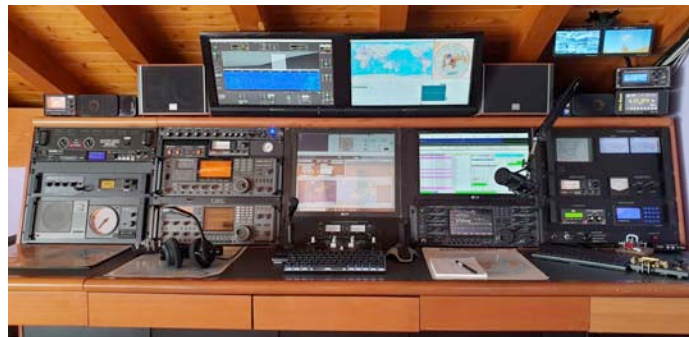


I just went through the process to renew my Global Entry privilege for another five years and am happy to report that it is quick and easy. No interview is required for renewal, and my new card arrived less than two weeks after I made application online. Curacao's inefficient and wildly awkward bureaucracies could learn something from the DHS Global Entry renewal process.

### Meeting IZ0BAV, Tony Marino

All too often I receive E-mail requests to confirm PJ2T contacts on the QRZ.com logbook. This is an awkward manual process, but I try to be a good guy and make good impressions for PJ2T, so I enter the confirmations. This morning (April 1) such a request came in from IZ0BAV. After I entered his contacts into QRZ.com I took a look at his material on-line and

gads, what a beautiful shack he has built. If you think your shack is pretty cool, how well does it stack up against Tony's, below!?



Operating console of IZ0BAV, Tony

### Two Sick Rotors Shipped to C.A.T.S.

On March 30 I shipped two rotors to C.A.T.S in Kentucky from home in Idaho. This is getting to be really burdensome because Dorothy and I had to haul two extra pieces of luggage all the way from Curacao to home. This year I'm going to look into what we'd need in order to be able to do rotor repairs at Signal Point in terms of tools and a parts inventory.



A Tailtwister and a Ham-IV rotor ready to go to Kentucky for repair

These were on the Europe tower and the WARC tower, respectively, for years. They are in separate boxes because they'll be shipped to different places after the rebuild. The hope is to get both of these back to the island in checked airline luggage by ops who are going down for CQWW SSB and CW.

### CCC Operators at Home

Here's (next page) Dave, VA7AM, when I visited his home shack in Vancouver on July 24, 2014. Send me a photo of yourself at your home shack for the newsletter?



VA7AM at home

In another home shack photo, here I am with Mike, RW0CN at his second home in Vancouver, B.C. Mikhail has operated many times at PJ2T and is a world-class CW operator, most often heard from his primary QTH in Kharbarovsk, signing RW0CN.



RW0CN and W0CG at his VE7ACN second home

**Member Spotlight:**

Our mystery member’s spotlight did not arrive in time for this month’s newsletter. Maybe next time.

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