



Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium
Editor: W0CG

Volume 19, Number 6

June 15, 2019

Financial Snapshot

As of May 31 the balance in the station support fund is at \$5567.20. Thanks Treasurer W8WTS. This will go up substantially when dues payments are posted.

K8ND and DL8OBQ at Signal Point

Jeff arrives at the QTH June 29, and DL8OBQ follows on July 11. Uli will operate PJ2T in the IARU HF Championship contest on the 13th, probably signing PJ2HQ, and will then host the youth (see page 2) that following week, departing the island on July 20. Uli will deeply mothball and secure the station until I arrive on October 16. Please get on the air and chat up our CCC members while they are on the island.

Newsletters and Bios Now on Our Web Site

Our newsletters are archived at www.pj2t.org. Click in the left contents frame on “CCC Newsletters” and then select the one you want. These newest ones are at the bottom. If I can find others missing from years past I’ll post them also. Can you help?

The small “Member Spotlight” bios from the newsletter are also on the web now by clicking in the left frame on “Member Spotlight Bios” and selecting the one you want. These are in Microsoft Word format.

PJ2T On the Air: WPX CW

As you surely heard on the bands, WI9WI piloted PJ2T at the end of May in the WPX code contest. In spite of conditions he made 2420 QSOs and accumulated 840 prefixes for a claimed score of 8,701,560 in SOAB HP. He said that QRN was heavy because of thunderstorms in North America. 40 and 20 were the money bands, and since one chases prefixes only in this contest, he stayed off of 160 and 10, an

excellent strategy for WPX. I have lost track of how many years Jim and Annette have made the trip south for this contest the week after Dayton. He operates as a single op, but he has said that he’s always open to partners if any other CCCers would want to join him in the future. Thanks to Jim for keeping PJ2T in view on the bands, and for his contribution of additional dollars to the club in excess of the normal contest trip reimbursement amount. Here’s Jim pounding away on 80 in the wee, wee hours of the morning last February with his best “Why’s Geoff taking this photo?” look.



Thanks K8ND for Log Labors

Special thanks to K8ND for an enormous amount of time and patience in collecting various historical PJ2T logs. On March 22 our QSL Manager W3HMK E-mailed Jeff in a panic that he had suffered a computer crash and lost some logs. Jeff then spent the weekend digging out PJ2T and PJ2HQ logs and sent them to Joe. After that he contacted W1ZFG, an ARRL LoTW administrator to see if it were possible to download logs. Dan was kind enough to load a massive PJ2T ADIF file from LoTW onto a drive and mail it to Jeff, who then archived the logs and also sent them to me. For many years I diligently archived every PJ2T log, but I have gotten sloppy of late, and Jeff has saved the day for us and for W3HMK. THANKS Jeff.

Here Come the Youth

The youth are returning to Signal Point July 14-19. The Dave Kalter Youth DX Adventure is a wonderful program initiated by Dayton-area hams KB8OCP (SK), N6JRL, and AB8YK. Since 2010, this group has organized trips to DX locations in an effort to stimulate interest in DXing and contesting among deserving young hams. Over time they have taken groups to Costa Rica, Saba, and Curacao. Last year the youth made 6,261 contacts using three modes and eight bands from Signal Point signing "PJ2Y." Here's David Samu, VE7DZO, who was at PJ2Y last summer and is a superb CW operator at age 15.



There are two essentials to making this superb program work: 1) on-site support, and 2) dollars. Last year and again this year, our CCC member Uli Thielke, DL8OBQ, is host for the youth team and their advisers. This is a BIG JOB that tests one's patience and goes on night and day for about five action-packed days. Uli has been very kind in doing this for the youth. YDXA subsidizes his airfare at \$1000, but this is still a big sacrifice for Uli. Last year our member N4RV also assisted the youth on site, and although he has left CCC Jack might go again this year.

I pick up the hosting cost of each youth visit to Curacao in that we charge them nothing for the use of the station and house, and also collect zero reimbursement from our members who support them before and after their visit and usually operate the IARU Radiosport contest before or after the youth trip. If you'd be willing to help defer some of the cost of hosting this excellent youth program please drop me a note.

The ARRL news release for their upcoming trip is at <http://www.arrl.org/news/the-dave-kalter-youth-dx-adventure-returning-to-curacao> . For the full background on the YDXA program, see <https://www.qsl.net/n6jrl> .

Recent PJ2T Logistics Maneuvers

On January 8 we bought about 400 feet of ½ inch Heliac from Danny Pease, NG9R (below), near Quincy, Illinois. We had been looking long and hard for a good deal on hardline to replace our failed South America and Pacific tribander coax and at \$400, this was the deal. Danny agreed to hold the cable for us in his barn until we could figure out how to pick it up.



True to form VE3CX, our do-everything member, offered to "swing" through Quincy in May on his drive from Thunder Bay, Ontario, to the Dayton Hamvention. Well. Check your map. Direct from Tom's home in Kaministiquia to Dayton is 968 miles. Via Quincy it's 1186 miles. So Tom's "swing by" added 218 miles to his drive. But, always willing to do what is needed for CCC, Tom picked up the cable. The photo shows Danny with the Heliac in Tom's truck in Illinois.

Next, we had a major convergence of PJ2T assets in the parking garage at Crowne Plaza in Dayton immediately after our CCC annual meeting on May 17. In addition to the Heliac he had brought from Illinois, Tom donated a Cush-Craft A3WS WARC yagi and also found two more substantial rolls of ½ inch Heliac (once the snow melted), one 250 feet and one 146 feet that VA3OJ (Randy) donated to PJ2T. All of this was in his pickup truck bed. WI9WI also had a large bundle of Hy-Gain element pieces that he kindly hauled all the way from the Wisconsin woods. N5OT showed up in the garage with our huge white amplifier hard case that

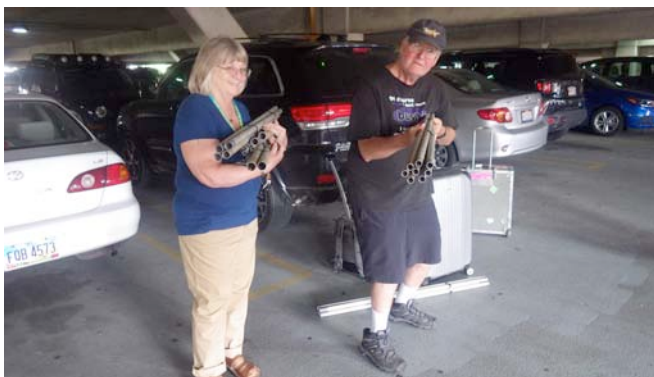
he brought up from Curacao, and WA9S came out to the garage with one of our hard-sided Cabbage Cases, also hauled from Curacao.

All of this stuff needed to get to my QTH in Northeast Ohio, four hours away, to be prepped for shipment to the island. I was driving my Ohio car, a run-out 2002 Toyota Corolla, so not much of that stuff was going to fit. W8WTS was on hand with his Jeep SUV, and K8PGJ offered his Dodge minivan. (Pete was instrumental in the design and building of that vehicle at Chrysler.) So we divided things up. WTS has the Cabbage Case and will bring it to my Ohio house in August. I brought the white case in my Toyota. And K8PGJ loaded up all of the Heliacx and the antenna parts, put them on hold at his home in Troy, Michigan, and will bring them to my place in Ohio when he comes on September 7 for my birthday party.

Here's Pete (K8PGJ) loading his minivan in the parking garage.



The next photo shows WI9WI and Annette (KA9DOC) in the Crowne Plaza garage threatening to shoot me if I didn't take the 20 meter yagi pieces off their hands.



With everything finally loaded, here's a commemorative garage photo (whew) of VE3CX, K8PGJ, and W8WTS. It takes a lot of maneuvering to get assets organized, moved to the island, and finally installed, and the Dayton Dance in this parking garage

is representative of the sometimes crazy stuff we need to do to support lots of "599 9s" from PJ2T.



Thanks K8IV !

We thank our newest member, Ed Polack, K8IV, for the donation of 320 feet of virgin new 1/2 inch Heliacx. Together with the hardline discussed above, we have nearly what's needed to replace ALL of the remaining RG-8 type of soft coax with hardline that will last forever, maintenance-free. More about that project next month, and a huge thanks to Ed.

We Bought a 3CX1200A7

On May 29 N5OT (Mark) found out about a 3CX1200A7 tube for sale. This is the tube for our AL-1200s, and it's of great importance because it is no longer manufactured, and thus is the key to our getting very long life out of our AL-1200s without modifying them for the 3CX1200Z7. We already have some spares on the island, but one more never hurts because we're critically dependent on this tube. Even better, the seller was a well-known and well-respected HC8N contester, K6AW, the tube had been tested but never used, and is even still in the Eimac factory box. \$750 is the fair market price for this tube, so we decided to grab it. Mark has it in Oklahoma now and will bring it to the island in November.

In discussing the purchase, there was some suggestion that this amount would buy about half of our next K3. This is definitely true, but we decided that there will be plenty of used K3s available in the future, whereas these amplifier tubes in known good condition come along very infrequently. Those of us at the Hamvention saw the new K4, and our member KOMD already has one pre-ordered. As these come on the market, the price of used K3s will hopefully drop....

CCC Membership Renewals / Dues News

Our club's membership year runs from June to June so as to coincide with the Hamvention. This year's membership renewal letter went out about a month later than usual because we needed to decide in the annual meeting at Dayton about a possible dues increase. As you already know, that increase was implemented by vote at Dayton, raising total annual dues from \$503.27 to \$550.00.

The reason for this small increase is to help fund our new PJ2T professional tower climber Jason, NR0X. The initial proposal in the meeting was to increase total dues to \$600.00. In the discussion N4QQ correctly pointed out that this placed the entire burden of the increase on everyone, including those members who very seldom are able to come to the island. John suggested the compromise idea that we increase general dues to \$550 and then change the per-week per-operator station support contribution from \$75 to \$100. That would have the effect of shifting some of the burden of cost to those who directly are using the station. This was immediately accepted as an excellent idea and passed by unanimous vote.

The dues structure now looks like this.

- Facility Fee Dues (real estate) \$300 (Same since 2000.)
- VERONA Dues \$28.57 (This is 50 guilders.)
- Station Support Dues \$221.43 (Up from \$175.)

With this dues increase approved by the members, I sent out the membership renewal letters on June 2. To date 12 of our 24 members have already renewed.

THANK YOU to all our members for this support. The Station Support money is how we buy transceivers and computers and spare parts, support the outside plant, and cover maintenance costs and upgrades to the station. The real estate portion helps cover utility costs (our largest expense), insurance, caretaking, maintenance, the security system monitoring fees, the Internet and phone connection, real estate taxes, occasional legal fees, and miscellaneous other costs. The dues don't cover all of the costs of the QTH, but it's enough to enable me to keep the house operating. Without the dues we could not do any of this.

In my world, five hundred and fifty bucks is a LOT OF MONEY. I'm sure it is in your world also. With those dues dollars you could have bought some fun goodies for your home station. But you choose to help support

our toy in Curacao. Thank you for your generosity in helping to keep PJ2T in existence and active on the air.

PJ2T Covets Another K3

We are keeping an eye out for a fifth PJ2T K3 transceiver. The four we own are barely adequate to support multi/multi operations, and as the sunspots begin to slowly improve we will need to be able to set up five stations, and by 2023 six stations. Members bring their own K3s when needed, but nobody really likes doing that, and we'd prefer to own our own as a club. Two of our K3s were donated outright, one by K8WDN (SK) and one by W1FJ. Another one was 50% donated by KB7Q through a challenge grant. If you have a K3 that is surplus to your needs, or will become so after you buy your K3S and K4, please keep CCC in mind. We're always on the lookout for bargains and gifts. (That's an artful way to say that we're begging.) ☺

Demolition Has Begun at Sunset Waters

Word came through from neighbor Albert Koers just prior to release of this newsletter that one building has been demolished. Containers are in place and more construction equipment has arrived on site. We look forward to more news (and photos) from K8ND, who arrives at the QTH on June 29.

CCC Annual Meeting: Dayton Hamvention 2019

We had an excellent turnout for the CCC Annual Meeting at the Hamvention.



15 of our members and three guests turned out. L-R: W9VA, N5OT, NR0X (kneeling), K2PLF, K8PGJ, KF4DX, VE3CX, W0CG (kneeling), KY7M, NA2U, N4QQ, W8WTS, N1ZZ (kneeling) WI9WI, WA9S, K8ND. Missing members: KB7Q, N7IR, K1ZN, VA7AM, K8IV, N8NR, DF9LJ, DL8OBQ, K0MD. (K8IV, N8NR, and K0MD were at the Hamvention but

had schedule conflicts.) Lee and I are showing off the new CCC polo shirts in this photo.

W8WTS will send out the meeting minutes when he recovers from his bout with bronchitis. But the quick summary is that we had fun, we finalized the arrangement with professional climber NROX, and we voted the dues increase to help fund him. This meeting is nearly the only opportunity annually for the SSB and CW guys in our group to meet and work out a common language so they can communicate. That communication got a little blurry as the Cliffhangers were consumed, shown in the foreground below. Thanks to N5OT for running an excellent meeting, for providing the raw materials for the Cliffhangers, and for getting us a beautiful top floor room for the meeting.



KB7Q's Incredible New Address

Our CCC V.P. Gene Shea (KB7Q) and Joyce recently “moved house” as the British say, across town in Bozeman to a smaller place suitable to we aging folks. Gene’s new street address?

3830 Spruce Meadow Drive

Honest to God, how long they must have waited, watching the real estate listings, for a conteste-relevant property address to come onto the market...!

Here and There Around the Hamvention



Above: where friends meet. The parking garage at Crowne Plaza. When I arrived Friday afternoon I pulled my little Corolla into an open spot (center), later realizing that KY7M was on the left and W8WTS on my right. This must be the right place for the CCC meeting! And yes, Lee DROVE from Phoenix....

Below, CCC presider N5OT presiding.



Above, former CCC President Rick (N0YY) and Jim (WI9WI). It’s Rick whom you can thank for our antenna switching system, the beautiful desks, the stainless steel bearings, and many other things. He will return to CCC membership soon, now that the turmoil

of the Iowa to Virginia move and his retirement are settling down.

Below, this tag on VE3CX's F-150 shows what Tom does in his non-radio spare time.



Above: Key early CCC members Goose (W8AV) and Doug (AD8CW, formerly K4LT and WD8AUB). Doug wrote the very first dues check in the history of CCC.

Station Technical Tips

Tip #1: Never use the preamp in the K9AY receive antenna selector boxes. The preamp brings in enormous amounts of interstation interference. Leave the preamp off at all times, and you will be able to hear perfectly well on the RX antennas.

Tip #2: There is a RigRunner 12 volt power strip on the back of the Station 1 amplifier table. If the muffin fan, 2 meter radio, or Autek wattmeter fail at Station 1, check for blown fuses in that strip behind the amp.

Tip #3: We have spare fuses for pretty much *everything* on site. These fuses are located in coffee cans and boxes behind the lower air conditioning duct cover in the East Bedroom. They are organized by transceiver, linear amps, or other uses, labeled on the cans. If you consume more than about one fuse, please E-mail n7ir@cox.net so that Gary can order and restock some replacement fuses.



Above, long-time CCC member and new octogenarian Dan, N1ZZ, in his role as a vendor at the HamSource table. Dan founded and owned West Mountain Radio, and gave the ham radio world the RigBlaster, RigRunner and many other innovative products.

Below, the K2PLF CCC table at the Dayton Contest Dinner.



CCC Polo Shirts

The new lime green CCC polo shirts (photo below) seem to be very popular. Except for one member, everyone in the club (and a couple of XYLs) ordered at least one, and some as many as three. I ended up getting 38 of them made in the initial production run. The actual cost of each shirt was a few pennies under \$30. Each member received one shirt for only ten bucks, the rest being covered equally by me and by the station support fund.

I hauled most of them to the Hamvention in two heavy suitcases, but that was free because I was on "two bags free" Southwest Airlines, Spokane to Denver to

Cleveland. It was only necessary to mail out four of the shirts.

I had these made at a local Coeur d Alene embroidery shop, so it will be very easy to get more now that the artwork is created and on file with them. Soon I'll send around an inquiry to see if any more are wanted. It will be easy to get different colors than lime green if you wish. They will be at cost, about \$29 plus mailing costs.



PJ2T Antenna Stories: 2 el 80 Vee Beam

I've been alarmed that some of our members don't know what antennas we have at the station. So this is the first in a series of mini-articles about our antennas, one at a time. Better background knowledge of our antennas will help you to make quick and clever antenna selections during contests.

Check the photo at the right. Second from the top on the left side is the button to select the "80M US/JA" antenna. This gets you a two element inverted vee beam at about 72 feet up on the US/JA tower, centered on an azimuth of about 330 degrees. When this antenna was first built, its gain was measured in the field at about 5.2 dBi.

This antenna was suggested by K6AM, who strung it up in prototype by hanging vees on the ends of the US/JA 20 meter boom. It performed well enough to warrant its being made permanent. An improvised antenna dangling from another boom is not a permanent antenna, so I went to work designing a solid installation. My goal was to have an antenna that would be very strong mechanically and easy to maintain. That required that the front (driven) vee would have to extend outward beyond the end of the 20 meter yagi below it so that the vee could be easily lowered without requiring removal of any other antennas on the tower. It was the same story for the rear (reflector) element. The 20 meter beam has a 34

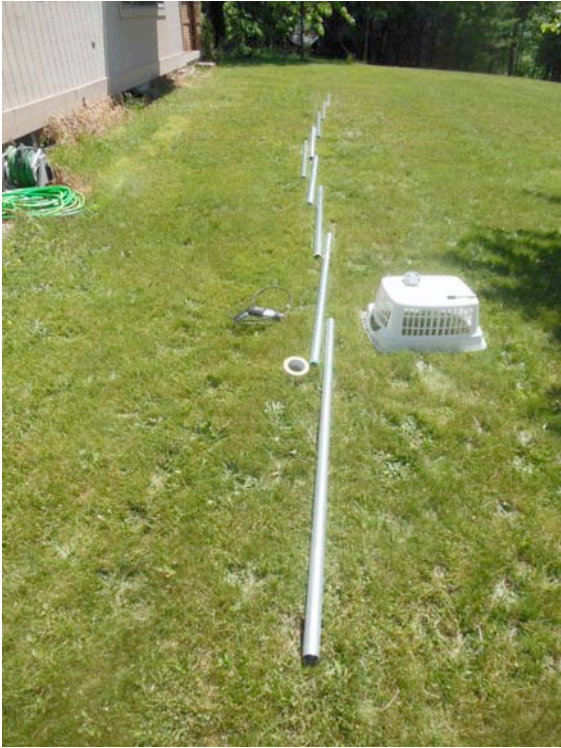
foot boom, so I designed a 39 foot long boom for the 80 meter vee beam.



The photo below from May 24, 2013, shows my old Toyota at DX Engineering in Ohio when I picked up the raw aluminum tubing pieces needed to fabricate the boom.



This was very thick wall material, and the boom was designed with a lot of overlap as shown in the pre-assembly layout photo (next page) in my backyard in Ohio. This boom is extremely strong.



I carefully drilled and mated the pieces together and fabricated a side-mount plate exclusively using stainless steel and aluminum.

To be able to get the two wire elements down easily, I mounted a stainless steel pulley in each end of the boom (below) and routed the nylon cable through the inside of the boom. In this way the climber could untie the ropes at the tower and easily lower each of the two elements to the ground without disturbing anything else on the tower, and with the boom left in its permanent position. After the first photo, I fabricated two end cap “keepers” from aluminum and stainless that would prevent the rope from coming off of the pulley (below).



Failure of these ropes would be disaster, requiring that the entire boom be taken down for repair, so I also designed a secondary lift rope system using stainless hook-eyes tapped into the thick boom material. When everything was ready, I marked it all with color tape for quick reassembly on the island and packed it for shipment along with several other items. Here's (next page) all the stuff for this 2013 ocean shipment in my minivan, with the vee beam boom at the right, capped with lots of padding and duct tape.



In the photo on the next page I'm on site September 15, 2013 with the entire two-element boom assembled and ready to be installed, complete with the secondary lift rope system ready and overhead Phillystran boom truss ready to raise. It's heavy!



The boom is exactly half the height of the tower, so Jason and I had to do some tricky wrangling at the top of the tower, photo below. The installation was successful after some scrapes and spilling of blood on the tower.



The next day we pulled the wire elements up into place and tuned the antenna. Everything worked and fit perfectly. In the intervening years we have lowered the elements several times for maintenance, and this has proven to be slick and easy.

The antenna is tuned for CW. To get it to SSB, we fold back a carefully-determined length of wire on the north leg of the driven element and on the south leg of the reflector. Only KB7Q and I are trained to do that at present.

In operation, this gain antenna performs extremely well. In times of heavy interstation RFI, you will probably do well to switch to the 80 Ridge dipole, but at all other times the US 2 element vee works wonderfully.

There you have it -- all of the thought, effort, and expense behind just one of the many antennas at the station. More such antenna stories will follow.

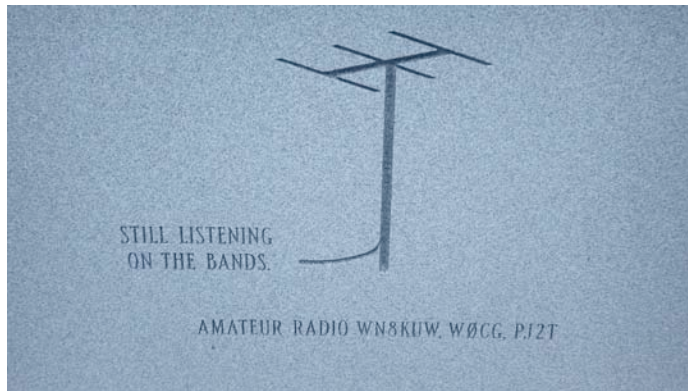
PJ2T Legacy Photo

Next page: December 2, 2009. W8WTS is standing on tip toes on the top plate of the Europe tower, at 107 feet, completely exposed to the wind and sun, putting a coat of epoxy primer on the mast after he had power-sanded it. If you don't climb, you can't begin to imagine how much personal courage it takes to do this. This was almost 10 years to the day before we replaced this tower.



Immortalizing My Hobby

This will sound to some as an enormous act of self-absorption, but I have recently completed the project of designing and having installed a small one-crypt above-ground mausoleum for myself. This was a big undertaking (pun intentional) in that it was manufactured in Vermont and trucked to my cemetery site in Wheeling, West Virginia. Because of the enormous weight of the granite, a massive six foot deep reinforced concrete foundation was required. I have very little family or connections, so I selfishly did this to help be remembered until the next ice age comes and sweeps everything away. I had quite a bit of stuff engraved on the side, but the photo on the next page shows the part of it that's relevant to our hobby. I figured that if some guys can have an engraving of their Corvette on their grave, or their golf clubs, then I ought'a be able to have a tower and a beam.



Previewing Some Topics in Next Month's Newsletter

- Our other club callsigns and how we might use them
- KB7Q's repairs and upgrades of the 80 meter Europe three element
- PJ2T Antenna Stories: The Force 12 Multiplier Yagi
- Tribulations with Signal Point's water line
- Team preview for CQWW SSB and CW operations
- Project to go "All-Heliac" at PJ2T
- Upcoming Fall 2019 ocean shipment
- Some details and background on the club's contest-week costs and reimbursements for a typical operation

Member Spotlight

Dave Shipman, VA7AM



Dave was born in the UK in 1944 but emigrated to Toronto, Canada in 1968 with his wife Gill. Two winters were enough and they moved to Vancouver where they have been for the past 50 years. Career wise he started with IBM in the UK and also worked for them in Toronto. On moving to Vancouver, he joined BC Hydro where he worked in IT and General Management until retirement.

His interest in Amateur Radio started when he was 18. However, on meeting Gill other considerations took place and he did not get his license until he was 39! They have a son and daughter and two granddaughters. Dave's interests in Amateur Radio are software, contesting and DX. Each year he tries to get to PJ2T for the CQWPX SSB contest. He is also treasurer of two local clubs – North Shore Amateur Radio Club and the ORCA DX and Contest Club.