



Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium
Editor: W0CG

Volume 19, Number 7

July 15, 2019

President's Column: "Change is a Four Letter Word"

The saying "the only thing constant is change" is attributed to that ancient Greek pioneer of wisdom itself, the philosopher Heraclitus. I am beginning to think we would do well at Signal Point to at least keep this in the back of our minds.

I'm one of those people who, at some level, deeply wishes nothing would ever change. I also realize it is not a realistic position. Oh well. I got on the air over the weekend for the IARU Radiosport and there were a couple notable things that were different. First, I never worked our PJ2HQ SSB station because I was on CW only. I guess I didn't think of that. Also, I realized how much I like using just one radio after years of trying to use two at the same time to remain competitive. That two radio stuff is for a younger man than me. I think both of these have elements of "change" at their roots, or perhaps "reluctance to change" at their cores.

Well friends, change is upon us at the CCC too. It seems like we may have to improve the way we do some of the things we do in order to thrive. Two great ideas just in. First is that in order for the club to sustain itself, we absolutely must cast newer, bigger nets so broadly as to improve our traction in voice and teletype operations. (Golly, at the Worldwide Radio Operators Foundation where I serve on the Board, we are jumping into the brave new world of digital contesting by sponsoring the WW-digi next month. Talk about a stretch!). On the plus side, we can improve so many aspects of our station and our club by pushing to change our voice and teletype strategies for the better.

Thing two is, with the radical overhaul of the Sunset Waters, née Chet Brandon's beloved Coral Cliff Hotel, has come a frustrating blessing in disguise. Our cozy low band listening antenna situation was

unceremoniously razed in the course of a single week. The new resort owners' heavy equipment made short work of our entire (somewhat secret) installation on "The Flats." So much for remaining under the radar, although I am sure they had no idea, and still don't. See elsewhere in this newsletter for pictures and a link to some great video.

We can all mope around and feel sorry for ourselves, or we can look at it differently. To quote our venerable Secretary/Treasurer Jim W8WTS, "Loss of the flats is an opportunity to do new things and improve our station. It is all about innovation. Disruption is often the greatest driver of innovation. Our utilization of The Flats for antennas has been static for many years. It is high time to shake things up and do something new."

You heard it here first. We are choosing to embrace the chance to try some new things which we are pretty sure will net even better results on the low bands. I mean, it's been pretty good for a long time, but we are thinking we have an opportunity to make it even better. The plans are in the works for newer and better listening antennas to be in place by the end of the calendar year.

Details will follow on that in the August newsletter. Also, if you've been counting the days since our Dayton meeting, the committee to assess a vendor's proposal to run remote ham radio operations at our station has settled on their recommendations. You will read about that next month also. For now, I'll see you on the air. Even better, I hope to see many of you in person in our warm winter climes this coming contest season.

73, Mark, N5OT
President, CCC, Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Financial Snapshot

As of June 30 the balance is at \$9353.76. Thanks Treasurer W8WTS for this info. This will climb higher once all membership dues have been paid for Year 20, and then will drop immediately lower as we buy cable, parts, wire, and transformers for the new Beverage project on the Ridge (August issue).

CCC Membership Renewal Tally

As of July 14: Of 25 members, 18 have now paid their dues. Thanks to so many of you for being so timely.

Some Topics Shifted to August

There's a lot happening. This month's newsletter has grown too long, so some of the topics I had planned for July will appear next month.

K3 Donated to PJ2T !!

Very surprising and VERY good news! CCC V.P. Gene Shea, KB7Q, has secured the donation of an Elecraft K3 (photo at right) from the estate of Fred Cady, KE7X. Fred passed away at 77 on May 17 after an utterly incredible life as an engineer, outdoorsman, author, designer, pilot, professor, and world traveler. We in CCC know KE7X best as the author of the "bible" book all about how to properly use the K3 transceiver.

Gene was Fred's friend, and asked Fred's XYL Katie (KC7BKP) and daughter Beth (N7NGW) about this donation, and they very generously assented. Todd (WA7U) was also instrumental in arranging this gift for us. Gene added the donation plaque you see in the photo.

The transceiver has a sub-receiver, DVR, and updated KIO3B and KXV3B boards. N7IR will upgrade the synthesizer, and we'll have it for the contests this fall.

Another K3 has been on our wish list and, as we see, wishes do indeed come true. Thanks Gene, Katie, Beth, and Todd.



October: CQWW SSB Contest

Our team for this year's CQWW SSB effort is K8IV, W0CG, ND8L, K8PGJ, KF4DX, CE3CT, K0MD, VE4GV and (hopefully) N8NR. This team definitely fulfills our goal of building a top-notch team of experienced contesters. All of these guys except Pete and Egon will be first-time visitors to PJ2T, and I'm looking forward to assuring that they all have a good time on the island and hopefully will want to return in the future. I'll serve as Contest Director for this one, and ND8L has graciously offered to be the team's chef.



K8IV (Ed) is our newest CCC member, a very close neighbor of mine in Ohio, and works at DX Engineering. He will be leading RTTY teams at PJ2T in the future. His friend Ray (ND8L) is an insurance professional and RTTY buff and hails from my former home, the Youngstown, Ohio, area. CE3CT (Roberto) is the builder/owner of Chile's biggest contest station (photo next page), a telecommunications engineer, and good friend of our member K0MD. As you know, Scott is Editor of "NCJ." Rob (VE4GV) is a very well-known contest op and in real life is an endodontic surgeon. Between Roberto and Rob this team maximizes the south to north geographic stretch of this team. Bob (N8NR) is a very long-time CCC member and built the Signal Point towers with me in year 2001.



We will be in the M/M category and will make a maximum effort to post a top score in our hemisphere. We'll be in competition in M/M with the newly-restored PJ4K station, which has a better location and bigger everything.

There's still room on the PJ2T team for one more top SSB operator (and XYL because the King bedroom at the Moran house is still open.) Can you come and help us?

November: CQWW CW Contest

In contrast to the phone contest, our CW team is entirely composed of PJ2T veterans. Contest Director KB7Q and I have put together another world-class team, including VE3CX, W0CG, KY7M, NA2U, KB7Q, N7IR, N5OT, N7WA, K2PLF, and N0YY. K1YR is also a "possible." These are all extremely proficient high-speed CW contest ops. Most of these guys were on the 2017 team that won CQWW CW and the 2018 team that came in World 2nd behind Zone 33, so we'll definitely be extremely competitive. Kathy Stewart has again graciously offered to be chef for the CW team, and Dorothy will be on hand to help me keep calm and send harder. After last November's enormous challenge and distraction of getting the Europe Tower in the air, 2019 will be a wonderful opportunity to just relax and have fun.

Our Changing Topography: The Bulldozers Have Arrived

Friday morning, June 28, I received a panicked phone call from my friend and across-the-street neighbor Dirk van Daam. The bulldozers had arrived unexpectedly early, and were tearing out all of the vegetation between Signal Point and the old hotel campus. The photo (thanks K8ND) shows the result looking toward Signal Point. This is not very different from how things looked beside the house in about 2002 at the height of a drought.



About an hour later the phone rang again. It was Zoom, who told me the same thing in an excited, high pitched voice, incensed that the dozer operator even made him move his truck out of the side driveway.

We knew this was coming. When I bought the QTH in 2000 I expected that soon there would be a house immediately adjacent to our property. It's prime million-dollar waterfront home sites. We're fortunate that "soon" took 19 years, and in that time we enjoyed free use of land that we did not own for our US/JA Beverage and the occasionally-installed 4SQ. We'll adapt to this change by reinstalling an even better US/JA Beverage somewhere on the Ridge. For October and probably November we'll put in a quick and simple temporary Beverage, then make a permanent installation when we're certain of the best location for it.

Here's some of the demolition that's presently underway at Sunset Waters. (K8ND photo)



Our Project to Go “All-Heliacx”

The old feedlines to the Pacific and South America tribanders are in very poor condition. It's so bad that the SA antenna is now unusable. Therefore we shopped aggressively last fall for a good deal on Heliacx hardline to replace this old RG-8 coax. As you read last month, we finally found a reel of 400 feet of Andrew LDF-50A in Illinois (thanks N5OT) for \$1/foot. Afterward, VE3CX was able to obtain a wonderful donation of two more hefty lengths of hardline from VA3OJ. At that point I sat down and did some arithmetic and realized that we might be within reach of getting enough hardline to make PJ2T “All-Heliacx,” and get rid of ALL of the unreliable old coax transmit feedlines.

Hardline is attractive because it is less lossy. But at PJ2T its main virtue is that it is very mechanically stout and, once installed is trouble-free for a very long period of years. In contrast, soft-jacketed RG-8 types of cable are susceptible to high UV, gnawing critters, water leaks through tiny slits, bird-nest construction damage, internal arc-over, and even abrasion damage from pulling other cables into and out of the bundle. Converting the station to all-Heliacx would eliminate the feedline maintenance and repair work of which I've done far too much over the years.

After we acquired the hardline described above, Ed (K8IV) offered that he had some surplus new Heliacx in Ohio. I asked him about that and he immediately donated 320 feet! I did more math, and with Ed's generosity we are now only one length short, 140 feet, of being able to go 100% hardline for all of our transmit runs. If you know of a source of that last length of 140 feet of 1/2 inch Heliacx please drop me a note. \$1/foot is a very good price for it in the secondary market.

After CQWW SSB I'll have some time to begin installing all of this new hardline. We have four donated connectors from WB9Z and sufficient funds to buy the rest of them. Once complete, this project will yield a super improvement in the reliability of our outside plant.

KB7Q's Upgrade of the 80 Meter Europe Wire Beam

Thanks to Gene, KB7Q, for his work on the Europe three element delta loop beam in the backyard. As most of you have seen, the knife switches that change the antenna from CW to SSB were in terrible

condition. We searched a long time for quality porcelain knife switches, and Gene finally found some on EBay and donated them to the station.

This antenna was a bit frazzled after being taken down and then reinstalled in connection with the Europe tower replacement. Also, we lost the support for the capacitive tuning wires on the driven and director elements when we removed the divi-divi tree last November to make room for the crane to lower and raise the towers.

Gene put in considerable time in March installing the new porcelain knife switches. He then reconnected the wires managed to find ways to support the capacitor wires in the absence of the old tree. He reports that this antenna now looks good on both CW and SSB and performs well.

Coral Cliff Legacy: October 1973

In the photo below the 1973 crew is erecting a push up mast in the backyard. The Ridge looks familiar in the background, but nothing else from our present day backyard is there yet. Paul (W4YWX, later N4PN) is on the ladder. Holding the mast is Bart Fay (K4CEF, later W4NS). Ed Sleight (K4DJC, later K4SB) is in the background. Sadly, all are SKs now. This is from the October, 1973 CQWW SSB contest operation.



Signal Point History: 2006

Here I am on March 19, 2006 digging trenches and installing water lines to the future outdoor sink and shower adjacent to the East Sunroom. I'm kneeling in almost the exact spot of my work desk in that new room. Construction of the East Sunroom started on February 14 and continued full time into late May. I was exhausted, hot, dirty, and happy to get back home to Ohio after this all ended. Then we went back in July to complete the interior work. Doing things yourself is the only way to get work done correctly and affordably on the island.



Station Technical Tips

Tip 1: The three element Europe Delta loop beam for 80 meters in the backyard has a knife switch near the bottom center of each element. There's an unterminated blue wire attached to each of these switches. For CW, you need to close all three switches so that the blue wire is connected. For SSB, open all three switches. After an SSB contest, please try to remember to close the switches to prevent corrosion of the receiving slots on the switches.

Tip 2: Any time you are using a Ridge antenna (either the Ridge Bencher tribander, or the Ridge 80 Meter Vee), the white W9NJY switch on the shelf to the left of the Station 1 amp must be powered on. There's a clearly labeled power switch on the front panel. In addition, you need to select the correct antenna using the rotary switch: Bencher tribander or 80 Vee. This is a four position rotary switch, and two of the positions are not connected to an antenna. The black box to the right is a dummy load, and never requires any action from operators.

Tip 3: If CW keying locks up during operation the first thing to try is to unplug the USB cable from the back

of the Winkeyer, wait a few seconds, and then plug it back in.

PJ2T Antenna Stories: F12 Multiplier Tribander

When you select "Triband" and then follow the black arrow down and push the "F12" button (see photo), you have use of the Force 12 tribander at the 80 foot top plate of the US/JA tower.



This antenna rotates on our new aluminum mast and stainless steel bearings, and its rotor control box moves here and there around the shack on a long cable depending upon how the room is configured for a particular contest. This antenna performs fantastically on all three bands. It's normally thought of a multiplier-grabbing antenna. But since it is much higher than the 10, 15, and 20 meter US/JA monobanders, it's very effective as a run antenna when arrival angles are low. It also may yield less inter-station interference, depending on which of many other complex antenna selections are in use at the other stations in a multi-environment.

That antenna is a Force 12 C-3E/H tribander. The "E" means that it has four elements on 10, and the "H" is the high strength 120 MPH version. Don't be fooled by the short 18 foot boom or the scarcity of elements, because it works incredibly well, and has the immense advantage of being free of traps. When we bought the QTH in Year 2000, PJ2JT had only one beam, an old Mosley Classic 33 at 54 feet at the top of what we now call the WARC tower. We moved that antenna to the top of the new 80 foot US/JA tower in 2001, and it served well as a mult antenna for many years. The traps began to fail, though, and we finally got tired of making so many trap repairs and bought the Force 12 new in June 2013 for \$1666.

Unluckily, we placed this order when Force 12 was in the process of being sold and then re-sold, and it took several weeks to get the order filled by the Bridgeport, Texas factory. By the time it arrived in Ohio there was not enough time to do a trial assembly, so we crossed our fingers that everything in the box was right and

shipped it to the island along with many other items of ocean freight. The timing of that shipment was forced by the planned early September arrival of a team to do antenna projects at PJ2T. The photo from September 6, 2013, shows the Force 12 and multiple other items of ocean freight when W9NJY and I picked them up at Caribbean Cargo Services.



The next day, our professional tower climber NR0X took down the old Classic 33 from the top of the tower to make ready for the new Force 12. We hit the mother of all glitches later that same day when we discovered that Force 12 had shipped the wrong length aluminum tubing center-element pieces for several of the elements. K8LEE, DL8OBQ, NR0X, W9NJY and I searched the PJ2T scrap pile for substitutes from which we could fabricate the right items, but no luck. This resulted in a panic phone call to Force 12. They were totally cooperative and immediately shipped the correct pieces to us via Fed Ex. While we waited for those we worked very hard on many other projects at the station.

The antenna parts arrived at Fed Ex on September 16, but customs would not release them to us because the shipping invoice indicated a dollar amount of \$0.00. They were replacements for parts we had already paid for, so there was no charge. But I could not convince Fed Ex nor customs to let us have the box, even though I could see it behind the service counter. After another two days of phone calls and document swaps back and forth between Fed Ex and Force 12, a modified invoice arrived showing a fictitious value for the parts. I finally picked them up at Fed Ex on September 17, with only one day left on this project trip. That was an incredibly frustrating 2.5 hour round trip to town because I arrived at Fed Ex at 12:35, in the middle of their lunch period. The clerk was at the desk, and I again could clearly see my box behind the counter, but she would

not let me have it yet. Lunch break. Nothing moves on lunch break. So I went back to the parking lot and sat in the truck. We started at each other through the glass until 1:30.01, at which time the lunch hour was over and she promptly gave me the box. Welcome to the Caribbean and Fed Ex Not World Service.



Time was critically short. Our climber was leaving the island the following day. I drove back to the station like a fireman, and our assembly crew was ready and waiting in the backyard with the tools (below).



The new parts were correct, we assembled and tested the rest of the antenna, and at about 4 PM Jason climbed up to begin assembling the antenna at the top of the US/JA tower.

Thus began an absolutely heroic period of hours in which Jason assembled the Force 12 single-handedly at the top of the tower, eventually working in pitch darkness with a miner's lamp. The photo (next page) shows him in twilight juggling the boom back and forth as he added element after element.



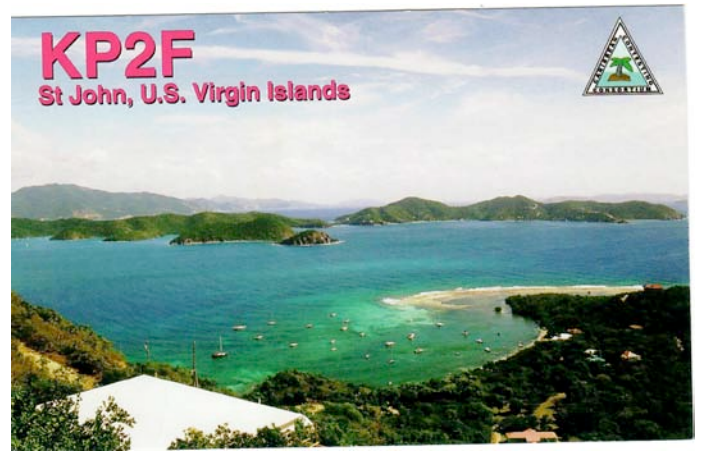
Miraculously, he finished everything and the antenna tested perfect in the late evening. Jason had the honor of making the inaugural contact on the Force 12. As testimony to Jason's good work that night, the F12 has needed zero maintenance in these six years of service.

Remember when you are running US/JA that at times the F12 may be superior to the monobanders, and that it can easily be selected conventionally or using the "Tribanders Direct" option. Also keep in mind that when chasing mults you can get almost all directions without rotating. South American, Europe, US/JA and the Pacific are available at the touch of a button. But if you need Africa or want to run long path, the rotatable F12 is a great choice.

Thanks again to NR0X, W9NJY, K8LEE, and DL8OBQ for coming to the island in September 2013 to work on this project. And that's the long story behind yet another of those little white buttons on the antenna selector boxes.

Our Other CCC Callsigns: KP2F and W0DX

I was very lucky to live on St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands, for five months in early 2000. I was on sabbatical leave from my university job, the main requirement of which was to pound out scholarly journal articles. They didn't care where was when I did the pounding as long as the productivity was there, so Cindy and I headed to a long term rental home in KP2. I spent every morning writing and the rest of every day loving the tropics. The QSL card photo is the view from the balcony of our rental home.



Naturally, I dragged radio gear down there, and the week we arrived on the island my long-awaited vanity callsign, KP2F, was granted. This was one of the last of three KP2_ callsigns available, and I was thrilled to have been granted my first vanity choice.

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United States of America
 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
 AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE
 KP2F

ATTN: GEOFFRY S HOWARD
 CCC ST JOHN
 1984 TRARES RD
 SUFFIELD, OH 44260

FCC Registration Number (FRN): 0001518687

Special Conditions / Endorsements
 NONE

Grant Date	Effective Date	Print Date	Expiration Date
01-20-2012	01-20-2012	01-21-2012	01-19-2020

File Number	Operator Privileges	Station Privileges
0005035985		CLUB

THIS LICENSE IS NOT TRANSFERABLE

Geoffry S Howard
 (Licensee's Signature)

FCC 608 - May 2007

Licensee: This is your radio authorization in sizes suitable for your wallet and for framing. Carefully cut the documents along the lines as indicated and sign immediately upon receipt. They are not valid until signed.

The Commission suggests that the wallet size version be laminated (or another similar document protection process) after signing. The Commission has found, under certain circumstances, laser print is subject to displacement.

Call Sign / Number: KP2F
 Grant Date: 01-20-2012
 Expiration Date: 01-19-2020
 File Number: 0005035985
 Print Date: 01-21-2012
 Effective Date: 01-20-2012

Operator Privileges: Station Privileges: CLUB

Special Conditions / Endorsements: NONE

ATTN: GEOFFRY S HOWARD
 CCC ST JOHN
 1984 TRARES RD
 SUFFIELD, OH 44260

AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE
 FCC Registration Number (FRN): 0001518687
 FCC 608 - May 2007

Geoffry S Howard
 (Licensee's Signature)
 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Since that time I've kept the license current under the title of "CCC St John." W9VA has used our club's KP2F callsign now and then on his forays to the V.I., and it is available for your use as a club member if you want to do an op from there.

In November of 2007 I organized a CCC trip to St. John to make a modest club effort in CW SS. Our member Mal Preston (NP2L) very generously provided us with one of his cars, a triband beam antenna, and

untold amounts of help at the rental house we had for the week.



Permission to install antennas was no problem because the owner of the house was Paul, NP2JF. The photo shows Paul on the roof, me on the ladder, and our member Tom (W8TK) handing up the coax.

Our team of W8TK + XYL, N8LGP, NP2L, and W0CG + XYL had a great time on the air. We didn't score very well with our modest antennas, but it was a huge thrill to be there, signing our club call of KP2F. Here's W8TK plugging away in the wee hours of Saturday morning, CW SS, 2007.



Callsign KP2F is ours to use. What would you like to do in the Virgin Islands? Is there any interest in putting together a small CCC operation there? Let me know, and we'll talk.

We're also privileged to hold callsign W0DX, the former callsign of famed Bob Denniston, former President of ARRL and IARU. How we obtained this callsign is a story for another newsletter, but for now I ask you to think about how cool it would be for us to run a CCC operation from within the U.S. using this famous callsign. Ideas? Propositions?

10-10-10 from Curacao by Bill Smith, W9VA

October 10 2010 was a very unusual day in the world of amateur radio DX. Any day that an All Time New Country appears is a very special day – but what happens when four ATNO's occur on the same day? After much speculation and anticipation such a day occurred on 10-10-10. The Netherlands Antilles was dissolved and Curacao became a country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Our CCC expert on all things Curacao, Jeff Maass, K8ND, had for months been providing almost daily updates on the developing change in status – with much see-sawing back and forth on both "If" and "When." Finally, only in September, Jeff excitedly reported that the if was no longer "If," and the When was 10-10-10. On the same date, the country status of Bonaire, Dutch St Martin, and Saba/St Eustatius also changed. The Curacao Telecommunications Bureau recognized the significance of the event and approved our use of the PJ2T callsign outside of a contest for the first time.

Since the first rumors of Country Curacao I had been thinking about what it would be like to operate from an **All Time New One**. And my membership in CCC made it so easy – how could I possibly not go. So I did, but none of my previous DX experiences prepared me for what happens when you activate a new country. Jeff K8ND had also been eagerly anticipating Country Curacao – he opened the doors to PJ2T a few days in advance, and was there on 40 meter CW at 0400Z on October 10, when the change became official. The first PJ2T QSO with New Country Curacao was not a random QSO. CCC member W9JUV (now SK) – who was not only at the Top of The Honor Roll – but had at the time an all time country total of 389, was given the honor of the first QSO with PJ2T in the new Country Curacao. QSO #2 was our friend and PJ2T visitor, K9QVB, and then the flood gates opened. That first session ended four hours later with over 400 contacts in the PJ2T log.

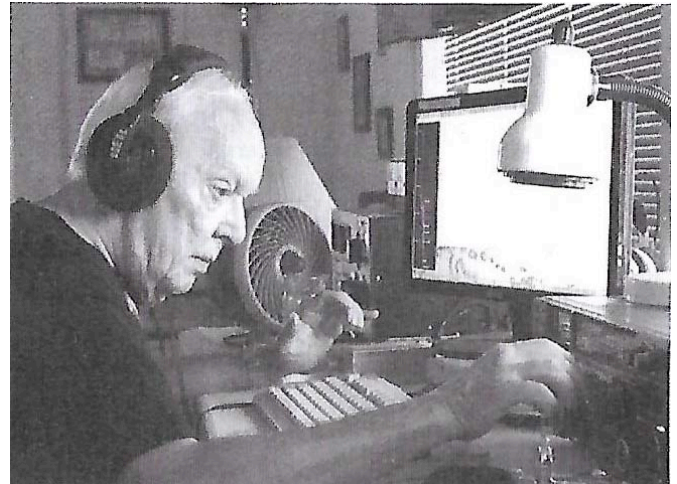
PJ2A, the club station of VERONA, the Curacao amateur radio society, was also active from the opening gun. Just by coincidence, on October 10 there was an international amateur radio conference in progress on Curacao. The Global Amateur Radio Emergency Conference was attended by representatives from ten countries. Jeff and I attended the monthly VERONA club meeting that Wednesday, and met some of the GAREC participants, including VERONA President Brett Ruiz PJ2BR, Radio Havana's Arnie Coro CO2KK, IARU Region 1 President Hans Timmerman PB2T, ARRL Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager Mike Corey KI1U, Jay Oka JA1TRC, and others. Many of these participants took advantage of the opportunity to operate from PJ2A, as well as from PJ2T. These fellows had the unusual experience of arriving in the Netherlands Antilles, but leaving from Country Curacao.

I had really wanted to be there at 0400Z on Oct 10, but there were conflicts that could not be resolved. By the time Jeff picked me up at the airport on Tuesday evening, there were almost 4,000 contacts in the log. After the first CQ, there was a continuous wall of stations calling whenever we touched the key or mike. Difficult to describe – You had to be there. Over 14,000 Q's later, we had to close the station down at 0400Z on October 18- exactly eight days from the start – in anticipation of an early morning trip to the airport.

It is worth noting that, in anticipation of the chaos on the bands from the simultaneous activation of four new entities by a bunch of well equipped DXpedition type operations, a formal band plan was developed and accepted by most of the 10-10-10 participants, including PJ2T. Each band was divided into five segments (for the five islands – PJ2-4-5-6-7). Curacao had the lowest chunk of each band – for example on 40 CW from 7001 to 7010 – so if I was on that band I had the responsibility to not let the pile-up drift above 7010. So in theory we could transmit on 7001 and could spread the pileup up to 7010. The problem, of course, was that PJ2T was not the only station in the world operating in the traditional DX portion of 40 CW, so the effective range to spread the humongous pileup calling was much smaller. Another interesting feature of the band plan was the treatment of 17 and 12 meters. Since these bands are so narrow to begin with, it was thought not reasonable to allocate the usual way – so the allocations were by band and mode, by day. For example, in Curacao we could operate 12 and 17 CW only on odd days, which we did. In general we tried to spend a lot of continuous time on a band - because the objective was to give as many different

stations as possible a chance to work the All Time New One – and if we moved around, the herd would simply move around with us, and the number of unique stations working PJ2T would be reduced. Our emphasis was on CW because a large crew would be following us in a couple weeks to do a Multi-Multi operation in the CQ WW SSB DX contest – making PJ2 phone contacts readily available to all.

In summary – with the emphasis of long runs on single bands, almost 6,400 different stations found their way into the PJ2T 10-10-10 log. Also 44 stations found their way into the log on 9 bands, 10 through 160. At that time in the sunspot cycle we had relatively good conditions – which allowed 1,850 contacts on 10 meters and 1,280 on 12 meters. We had good openings to Japan on 15 and 17 – North American stations were generally very good about standing by for “Asia Only” during the brief openings to that area – also picked up a few VK's and ZL's.



Note – The above photo and this report are from an article which I wrote that was published in the March/April 2011 issue of The DX Magazine. The 10-10-10 Curacao project was an unforgettable experience which I cherish to this day.

Health Check on our WARC Tower

The small aluminum tower in the backyard came with the house when we bought it. John Thompson (W1BIH, PJ9JT) installed it in 1972. In the 28 years before our arrival it supported a Mosley CL-33 tribander, and was the only tower on site. Here (next page) is the shipping invoice from 10 July 1972.

Standard Domestic Freight Bill of Lading, Adopted by Contract in 1934, Southern, Western and Great Classification Territories, March 15, 1935, as amended August 1, 1935 and June 15, 1941.
 This Memorandum Form Bill of Lading has been issued and is not the Original Bill of Lading, nor a copy or duplicate, thereof, in the event of loss, theft or destruction.

Shipper's No. _____ Company Agent's No. _____

Received subject to the classification and tariffs in effect on the date of the receipt by the carrier of the property described in the Original Bill of Lading of _____

at _____ on _____ 19__ from _____

Consigned to _____ (Best or other address of consignee for purposes of notification only)

Destination _____ State of _____ County of _____

Route (for amateur radio use) _____

Delivering Carrier _____ Car Initial _____ Car No. _____

No. Packages	Description of Article, Special Marks, and Exceptions	Weight (Lbs. or Kgs.)	Class. or Rate	Check or Initial
3	aluminum tower & hardware #809 (11.6cu/ft) = (34.8cu/ft)	(34.8 cu/ft)	502	
1	aluminum plate & hardware	(2 cu/ft)	502	
1	steel base	(1 cu/ft)	502	
5	1 AJ-14 (2-1/8" I.D.) (to be spray painted)	(42.800/ft)	502	
	1 AJ-18			
	1 AJ-22			
	2 AC-18			
	2 AC-22			
	1 SUPP/stand-22 (aluminum plate) (no rods or templates)			
	1 FC-10			
	1 2" dia. alum mast			
	82 bolts & nuts			
	1 special 12"x6" post base			

PREPAID

Agent on Carriage _____

Shipper, Per _____ Agent, Per _____

Very little maintenance has been needed. The initial set of guys were installed in a hurry, so in 2009 K8LEE and I put in better hardware and corrosion-proofed everything better. Then in December of 2015 I rebuilt all three guys sets yet again, even better, and they have been maintenance free since.

The rotor plate, however, has been a big problem. We didn't realize in year 2000 that we should replace this original plate, thinking that it would be fine because it was aluminum. But the PJ9JT guys had made the mistake of installing the homebrew aluminum rotor shelf with galvanized U-bolts around the tower legs. By 2006, galvanic action had eaten through about half of the diameter of all three tower legs. That September, I installed three two foot long pieces of heavy galvanized pipe as splints. I epoxied these pipe segments, wrapped them in many layers of Scotch 33, and fastened each to the tower legs with six stainless pile straps. This was very effective in strengthening the tower.

By 2018, though, the pipe splints had rusted badly. So in February 2019 I removed all three splints and the three U-bolts anchoring the rotor plate. The photo shows about half of one of the legs eaten through. (The hardline is visible to the left of the leg.)



This time, I used aluminum for the splint material. After cleaning off all the oxidation, I splinted a piece of 24 inch 3/4 inch diameter solid aluminum rod to each leg. On each leg, one of the splint fasteners is a stainless U-bolt around the splint, the tower leg, and into the rotor plate, with an aluminum backer plate that I fashioned to fit behind the plate's mounting tab. Then I added six stainless pile clamps per splint. The result is corrosion free and very, very strong.

But more work remains. The rotor still does not work, and before it can be replaced I need to install the aluminum stiffener plate that I made for the somewhat weakened original rotor plate. Next, a double mast bracket has to be installed because there is no lower

Since it's aluminum, this tower is still in most places in excellent condition. The exceptions are the steel base and the legs at the rotor plate. John installed the steel tiltover base in poured concrete. By the time I arrived in 1999, the tower was tilted down into the yard, tangled in weeds, and the base steel was in very precarious condition because of rust. K4LT, W9EFL and I elected to take the risk crank up the tower one time. Amazingly, it went up without incident, but we knew we had been lucky and that repeated ups and downs were infeasible because of the terrible condition of the base. We decided there and then to convert it to a non-tilt tower and installed one set of Phillystran guys. Soon after, I built a triangular concrete form and encased about 2.5 feet of hopelessly rusted steel base pieces in a concrete sarcophagus. That was a lot of concrete to mix and pour by hand and Howard Stone, our next door neighbor, saw my predicament and came to lend a hand.

The following year we moved the CL-33 to the top of the US/JA tower as a multiplier antenna and installed a new Cush-Craft A-3WS, fed with hardline, for 12 and 17 meters. I also hung a simple 30 meter inverted vee near the top, and W8AV suggested that we put a 160 meter Inverted L up that tower with a leg from the top of that tower to the top of the Europe tower. The tower soon came to be known as the PJ2T "WARC" tower.

thrust bearing on this tower. Only then will I (or Jason) be able to safely remove the rotor and put in a new one. Wiring of the WARC rotor is laborious because the geometry of the rotor plate makes it impossible to use a rotor quick-connect. So it will be one wire at a time to a barrier terminal strip up there, then re-encasing everything in weatherproofing. That will get the WARC beam turning again.

Next, we need to build concrete forms and add about three more feet vertically to the sarcophagus around the base. It's impossible to replace the steel base parts, some of which are almost rusted through. The result will be a situation where only aluminum parts are exposed, and the tower itself is in concrete about six feet above the ground. This is urgent, and requires considerable setup, including ordering sand and gravel, and transporting many sacks of cement to the site. If you want to build up your biceps, I have a deal for you this fall.

Once that work is finished, the WARC tower should serve us very well for many more years almost entirely maintenance free.

Signal Point's Water Line Adventure

For most of our 19 years in the neighborhood, water service interruptions have been routine. The problem has been the galvanized steel distribution line that ran from Soto to the Sunset Waters area under the road. When the water went off I could like clockwork count on finding a crew a couple of hours later digging up a section of the road and patiently and painstakingly replacing the Swiss cheese rotted piping. Over the years this has resulted in an almost hysterical pattern of patches, bumps, and potholes on the road from Soto.

Finally a couple of years ago Aqualectra installed a modern large-diameter plastic line under the shoulder of the road. But that new line ended at Sunset Waters, and the last half kilometer to the Signal Point area was still small galvanized piping on the surface. Then, as most of you saw, sometime in late summer of 2018 they finally extended a buried plastic line to the neighborhood, terminating in a ditch across the street from the house. Here's that spot a few weeks ago (blurry, sorry).



Typical of all things Curacao, that ditch has looked like this for nearly a year now, and the contractor to Aqualectra is taking forever to finally connect the houses to the new line. The distribution lines to the houses are installed, but not connected.

On many occasions last winter I saw crews stopping there to take samples for biological testing. I chatted with them whenever I saw them. Also from time to time the contractor would stop by, stare, scratch his head, and then drive away. During that time we let them know that our house had been forgotten, and that no new distribution line had been installed for us. The guy scratched his head some more, grimaced, took a puff from his cigarette, and drove off. In March a couple of fellows came into our Signal Point yard and dug here and there around our water meter, scratched their heads some more, covered it all back up, and disappeared yet again.

All of this fits perfectly with the style and method of all things tropical, described so aptly in Herman Wouk's "Don't Stop the Carnival." The wait and uncertainty were nerve-wracking because all of this digging is very close to our buried feedlines that cross the road to the Ridge antennas. Then finally, without pre-notification, they showed up last week on July 10. K8ND was at the station to let them into the yard, thankfully, and Jeff reported that at one point there were four pickups, eight people, and a backhoe out there.

The photo (next page) shows them beginning to re-fill the road trench for the new water line. They did an excellent job, encasing the new water line in a piece of protective conduit. The grey conduit you see in the ditch at the bottom left is our transmission lines up to the Ridge, and they respected that very carefully.



They drilled a hole through our wall, installed our old meter outside the wall, and connected to the buried plastic line that serves the house. Jeff and our neighbor Dirk stood by to assure that they didn't dig up any of our feedlines. It appears that they finally also filled the access hole (previous photo) across the road that has been open for roughly a year. Thanks to Jeff and our neighbor Dirk for overseeing this critical project.

Quick Preview of September's Ocean Shipment

This September I'll prep and ship another increment of freight to the island from my home in Ohio. It will consist of several large items including hundreds of feet of Heliac hardline and flexible watertight conduit, our 7th AL-1200 amplifier, two yagis, lots of spare element tubing for our Hy-Gain antennas, 4000 feet of coax for our new Ridge Beverage antennas, and lots of Beverage antenna wire. There will also be a box of transformers, switching devices, terminations, and other parts for the Beverages. The shipment will be costly, as always, but our ability to do these difficult things is what sets us apart from stateside contest stations.

Do you have anything large or heavy to donate? If so, this is the time to add it to the shipment because

additional items are pretty cheap. We're still looking for a simple, large, dated linear amplifier, for example.

Member Spotlight

Tom Haavisto, VE3CX



I got my ticket in 1974. Back then, you wrote the test. If you passed, you paid your money for a station license, and then waited for your station license to arrive in the mail – took a few weeks as I recall. Then, the big day arrived, and I was... VE3HHS. I was thrilled! Until it slowly dawned on me it was a rather terrible call. Terrible on CW, and it did not help that I had a Knight Kit transmitter. I was using a multi-band vertical, and it turns out it had a bad issue with harmonics. I was called CQ on 40 meters, and a weak signal came back – it was the local radio inspector. Turns out – he heard me on 20, and answered me there. Good thing he also had a crappy TX, and I heard a weak signal on 40, as I thought that was where **he** was... After that, I purchased a Heathkit HW-101 – a very popular rig at the time, and things got a whole lot better. After six months of operating only CW, one could apply for a 10 meter endorsement, which allowed you to operate phone on 10 meters.

At the time, 10 was HOT. So – quite a few folks went to phone, and never looked back. I wrote my Advanced ticket in 1975 – you had to be licensed for a year before you could write the Advanced. The Advanced gave you voice privileges on all the HF bands. Like many of the locals, I was busy chasing DX, and having a great time with crappy antennas. I put up a tower with a small tribander, and things just kept better. I was unaware of contesting at the time – I just happened to notice some weekends were better than others.

In looking back over old logs, I entered the CQWW SSB contest in 1977 as CY3HHS, using a Drake C line, a Heathkit SB-220 amp, and a 2 element Gem quad. The were manufactured in Winnipeg, and I

expect that Josh – 6Y5WJ has probably one of the last remaining ones still in service. I did 594 Q's, 25 Zones, 60 countries for a score of 121, 195 points as SO single band, high power, 20 meters. Those were the days! A few years later, one of the locals was able to obtain a 2 letter call, and he had to leave his (old) three call call behind. Since I was not happy with VE3HHS, I applied for his old call, and became VE3EEW. It sounded so much better on CW.

In chatting with friends, we all saw the various shortcomings of our stations. I often spoke of “some day, I will move to the country! Have more than one tower (that was unheard of at the time), and some property with no neighbours or line noise”. That was a dream I hung on to for a long time.

As the time, one had to be licensed for 10 years before you could apply for a 2 letter call. My good friend and I both got out tickets when we were 16, and were both itching for 2 letter calls. The local radio inspector was having none of that – we were **far** too young to have “old man” calls. So, we applied through another office in Sault Ste. Marie, and some months later, another letter showed up in my mailbox. I was now the proud holder of VE3CX, and have held the call ever since. In later years, I found a picture of the founding of the Lakehead Amateur Radio Club (the local club). Low and behold, there was... VE3CX – a founding member! The holder of the call was Harold Raynor, but it was interesting to see the old call return to Thunder Bay many years later.

Over the years, my station in Thunder Bay evolved with a variety of antennas. One of the things I always wanted to do was complete 5BDXCC, which I never did. I managed DXCC on 10-40 meters, but only managed 87 confirmed on 80. City noise was horrible – S9+20 most of the time. I read ON4UN's book on low band DXing, and learned about the gray line.

In the 2005 WPX contest, I was running high power, and starting having rig issues. I borrowed a TS-440 (what a terrible radio!) My friend had installed a 6 KHZ filter in it for listening to AM broadcast radio, and he was super happy with how it sounded. Me – not so much. It was hard to sort out 5-6 stations on a frequency... To make matter worse, I got a visit from a neighbour – seems I was also causing massive RFI issues in the neighbourhood. For me, that sealed it. It was either time to move, or give up on the hobby. I decided to move.

It took a few weeks before I found a place west of Thunder Bay. 25 acres, small house (960 SQ feet)

with a 200 amp panel! It was... perfect, so away I went. I had been collecting antennas over the years – mostly as folks took down monobanders and sold them, I would put them in storage in my garage. So – when I moved, I already had a good start, antenna wise.

I decided to start with 3 towers, and grow from there. They were self-supporting towers – that is what is commonly found around here. A few weeks later, I was talking to my brother-in-law, and his neighbour was a short-wave listener. Seems the talk of the tow was **someone** was building a station with **three** towers, and I started laughing. My brother-in-law very quickly figured out they were talking about me!

Being in the country has been an amazing experience. In 2006, 10 was in the crapper – and was for a number of years after that. Having space, I was able to build out the station with monobanders for every band, and discovered the wonders of Topband! I decided to start over with my DXCC – things progressed rather quickly. Oddly enough – I did managed to get 5BDXCC – on 160-15 meters, but 10 was a real challenge. My claim to fame is – having DXCC on 160 – with the certificate hanging on the wall, and only 28 countries on 10... Granted, once there was a hint of an opening, DXCC on 10 was in the bag and 5BDXCC now hangs on my wall at long last.

Being in the country, I have been able to pursue my primary interest in the hobby. Chasing DX has sort of fallen to the side, and I have taken a far deeper interest in contesting. Having all mono-banders, I upgraded the station to SO2R. With no neighbours, RFI issues are largely behind me. So – staying up all night contesting in a great way to go.

One of the things I did was start to travel to various contest stations – partly to become a better contester, and partly to see what other people are doing, to gain ideas for my own station. Visiting W0AIH was a mind-blowing experience. Paul claimed 40 towers, but we all know that was on the low side. I expect the real number is closer to 70. It was also my first take of multi-op operating, and it was a game changer! I have been to W0AIH, 6Y5WJ, NQ4I, VE3JM, K2LE, NR4M, and of course, PJ2T.

PJ2T is amazing. I like that you can get on a plane with a carry-on in the middle on winter when it is minus 40C, and a day later be in a tropical setting with plus 30C temps. Needless to say, I cannot wait to return to a great station, with great pileups when its time to leave the snow and cold behind for a week this

fall. I can truly say I have found my second
contesting home – at PJ2T!



Coming in the Next Issue

PJ2T Antenna Stories: Three Element 80 Meter Delta
Loop Beam

W0CG on What Wins Contests at PJ2T

The Dollars and Cents of Contest Weeks at PJ2T

Permanentizing PJ2T's RX Antenna System

The W0DX Callsign

About the PJ2T Commercial Remote Proposal

Thanks to N8NR