



Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium
Editor: W0CG

Volume 19, Number 9

September 15, 2019

Financial Snapshot

As of August 31st the balance is at \$7439.62. Thanks Treasurer W8WTS.

CCC Membership Renewal Tally

On September 15 we still await dues from three of our members.

Additional Donations to Youth DX Adventure

Since last month's newsletter we have received additional donations from VE3CX, K2PLF, and W9VA. Bill (W9VA) surprised the club with an incredibly generous donation of \$250.

Cumulatively now we have received \$575, precisely the amount needed to cover the club's direct cost of supporting the youth trip. Thanks to all who helped to support this very important program.

W0CG Visits the K2PLF QTH

On August 31 Dorothy and I were privileged to visit Marty at his beautiful home in rural northeast Maryland.



The photo is in Marty's shack, which is in the process of being moved to its new location up from the basement.

Marty had an AL-1200 that had belonged to SK Art Brown, W3KHZ/VY2MM. Marty held the amplifier until we were able to pick it up. This will be our seventh AL-1200 and will be a welcome and much-appreciated addition to PJ2T. I met Art several times, a great DXer and contester and a superbly nice person, and we are very flattered that he chose for it to become part of PJ2T's station.

The logistics worked out perfectly. Dorothy was at a museum convention in Philadelphia the week before. On the 30th I drove to Philly to join her for the last night of the convention, and the next day we made our way to Marty's. Marty and Patty hosted us for a wonderful summer burgers and corn-on-the-cob dinner cooked up by his son, after which we all ate too much ice cream. We much enjoyed spending the night in a welcoming and comfortable guest bedroom at Marty's and then headed out early on the morning of September 1, achieving our goal of making it to a jubilee at Jackson's Mill, WV, the site of many happy ARRL conventions when I was a young teen.

The photo on the next page shows the amp loaded at Marty's into the backseat of my rusty rattletrap old 2002 Toyota. Once we got to my home in Ohio I dismantled it in place in the car, getting the transformer and tube and chimney out before lifting the then much lighter RF deck out.



Normally I prefer to test everything before it goes to Curacao, but the timing made that impossible this trip. We'll give it the onceover in Curacao and get it performing well I'm sure.



Above: Dismantling the AL-1200 in my car so I'd be able to lift out the RF deck.

What Role Does PJ2T Play in the Contesting Community? by Rich Heinrich, N0YY

I've been thinking about the recent Youth DX Adventure and the role that PJ2T plays. Beyond the opportunity to bring youth into our hobby, there are many elements that we all enjoy. PJ2T is a collection of what are the best elements of DX-ing, contesting, applied technology, and team building that our hobby has to offer.

This is all very personal for me. My journey started in 2005 when I sent out an all call seeking a Caribbean contesting opportunity. It was a bit of a selfish request looking for some exposure to contesting from the Caribbean in preparation for my 2006 ARRL DX CW adventure as a single op, low power entry from Guadeloupe (FG). Geoff, W0CG responded to my request and offered a seat

on the 2005 CQWW SSB team. The lessons I learned were PRICELESS!



Above: N0YY operating in CQWW SSB, October 28, 2005. – Ed.

As a community we enjoy things like Contest University where experts bring their knowledge to beginners and seasoned participants in radiosport. They offer insight into station design, mode specific concepts and practical examples, antenna design for different contest environments, propagation, etc. This provides the preparatory perspectives for the participants. But what is "missing" is the hands-on of how all of those concepts and theories manifest themselves in chasing DX or in a 12 or 24 hour contest.

I think the best reference I can offer is that this is like college chemistry. You spend an hour a day for 5 days attending lectures to learn concepts and theory and then mixed in that sequence is a 3 hour "lab" where you apply some of the theory to a real world "experiment" and review the results. Many of the premier contest stations invite new participants to play next to the experienced operators. They are invited to witness the station design, operator techniques, and provide a hands-on opportunity to sit and be one of the team to build a winning score. PJ2T is one of those premier stations!

So let me share some personal experiences and observations to help the reader understand things from my perspective.

For most of us contesting is reduced to personal performance. Beating last year's score. Improving run vs search and pounce performance. But there is always a question mark of how you measure up against the competition. How well can I handle a pile-up? Can I perform well enough to justify a seat at the "big kids" table? Do I have what it takes to be part of a well-oiled machine that when the dust settles is recognized as a real competitor?

PJ2T provided the backdrop for the personal introspection of how I might fit in the game. But most important, and not mentioned in the list above, was could I bury my ego and truly learn from my teammates and the operating environment. WOW! That first exposure to PJ2T in 2005 opened my eyes to many different perspectives. Looking back it was an opportunity to both learn and share. I thought it might be interesting to offer some of those observations.

The Station

There are many variables when it comes to testing your skill set. What I wanted to avoid was a "field day" type of experience that would allow a real perspective of operating skill and not the variations of placing antennas, hooking up radios, "...did I remember my keyer", without any background of the local challenges. PJ2T was a well-known, premier, Caribbean contesting site that was 90% tried and true. Geoff and his team assembled a multi-tower, multi-antenna station that had been modeled and optimized. It remains a resource for educating operators and bringing new operators into the fold. It truly is an "arrive and operate" station. Sure there are the necessary introductory elements of antenna selection, station configuration, etc. but there is no requirement to climb a tower and install the antennas before you can make a QSO.

Probably the most unique thing about PJ2T is that is well documented. When comparing PJ2T to other multi-operator stations it is more than a collection of photos that leave the operating knowledge to more than a radio's front panel. Antenna selection, computer network, software, receive antenna integration, and on and on is completely documented. If you choose to read

those "instructions" and look at the schematics of the station it is entirely possible to sit down and operate immediately. And new improvements have further enhanced that ability to play effectively from the start.

<< Editor's Note: I will never forget the day Rick walked into the shack for the first time. He had done his homework. He immediately pointed out each station by nomenclature, knew the entire suite of antennas, and needed absolutely zero instruction on how to use the complex manual antenna selection system. >>

It is a well "engineered" station that has stood the test of time and armies of operators coming in, doing their best, and enjoying the results of those efforts.

The People

There are so many variations of people and experiences that are part of the PJ2T operator set. Some are high powered executives that enjoy stepping away from their day to day workload to just unwind with other ops or to apply their own special operating skills. Others have been involved in Caribbean contesting for many years and know when to point an antenna in a different path or when conditions might favor a unique opening to a special part of the world.



Above, an example of PJ2T camaraderie. The CQWW CW 2014 team signaling a long-distance "Hello" to DF9LJ, who was not able to be there. N0YY is in the back row. -Ed.

It is always fun to sit with someone that operates low power using wire antennas at home and watch

how they unleash their operating skills when they have power, antennas, and being a multiplier that everyone wants to put in their log. So many things to learn.

Some bring broadcast station design to their experience set. Others bring high performance computer networks to the fore. And others are teachers in their career and understand how to “get the point across” when documenting the station or talk about an alternative way to approach the bands.

But the experience set continues to evolve. The charter team was a CW centric team that worked well together. New skills for RTTY, SSB, VHF, and other bands and modes are part of the recruitment to ensure that PJ2T remains knowledgeable in the various aspects of DX-ing and radiosport.

Performance

For someone that thinks a 200 QSO per hour rate from a stateside location is a wow, just come to PJ2T and experience 350 QSO per hour rates (or more!). The pileups in the evenings leading up to the actual contest or during a band opening sets the tone for testing one’s skills. Add to that the need to balance total QSOs to multipliers and you get a sense of being busy. You work the pileup down and then use the second VFO to search for multipliers. Sometimes you have to make a decision of “...will that multiplier come to me or do I have to find him.” And the integrated computer system allows almost seamless passing of multipliers or band change requests to enhance the ultimate score.

Or there is the opportunity to create QSOs when they aren’t apparent. Consider the late night opening (2am local) on 15M long path to Europe. I used the fixed South American antenna and followed the “spotlight” propagation as it moved across Europe. Those 50 QSOs would not have happened if you weren’t trying to make them happen!

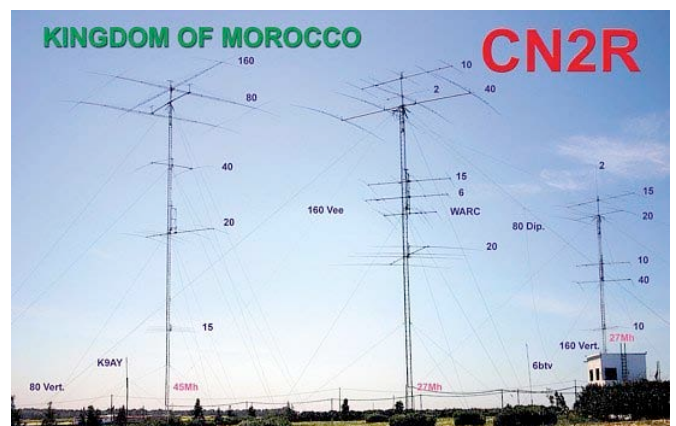
The station works. It provides the foundation for you to test the “...can I play with the big boys” as you sit down at a radio during your shift. Or

maybe you try to do two operators at a time – each copying different calls to enhance the rate. It is fun to learn that some guys copy higher or lower tones and get completely different calls than you and the overall QSO rate is increased. But it all about the team and the bottom line at the end of the contest.

But understand there are two elements to “performance”. The technology side – the radios, amplifiers, antennas, software; as well as the human performance play an important part of the end to end machine. Some guys are rate guys – others are multiplier guys. Some prefer to grind it out at night while other are daylight ops. But the human and technology play together to establish a world-class environment.

The Reputation

Being part of PJ2T puts you on a unique plane. There is an “instant respect” when you are part of one of the teams – either as one of the more experienced operators or someone learning the ropes. An example during that 2005 learning experience was when I was ragchewing with CN2R late in the evening on 75 SSB. It was a couple of nights before the contest when he indicated that his beverages were not performing. He warned of conditions that provided high angle receive paths different than what was “normal”. Based on that insight we put up a couple of Flag/Pennant receive antennas to supplement the beverages and it proved to be a lifesaver for that weekend. I could not have imagined ragchewing or sharing operational tips as a single op in the states – but the sharing with PJ2T was part of a sharing among the upper echelons.



As I travel and talk to other contesters, there is always a special recognition of "...oh you were part of the PJ2T team? Boy would I like to be one of the team someday."

So while this perspective started with bringing youth into the hobby, there is also a role to build a base of top tier contesters. The graduates of Contest University have been exposed to the keys to the empire but applying all of that knowledge is what makes a contester - that and applying that knowledge again and again and learning from each experience.

For me being part of the PJ2T team is a dream come true. I just hope that the youth or other operators reach out and try to find a place that allows exposure to one of the most interesting and rewarding aspects of this great hobby.

An Idea from VE3CX

CCC needs a "club thing." Two ideas come to mind. One never knows *who* the op is at PJ2T in a multi-multi, so how about everyone use the name "JOHN"? Short for John Thompson.... Or - JT? I was thinking - as a way of saying 'TU', just send JOHN instead. It could be used by all CCC members, and folks who have been to the station. Kind of a way of saying tribute to John Thompson that we can use on an ongoing basis or as part of our focus in next year's 20th anniversary year.

October: CQWW SSB Contest

We were tremendously disappointed that K0MD had to withdraw from the team because of an excessive travel schedule. Luckily, W8WTS answered my desperate plea for help, commenting that he had *never* operated a phone contest from Signal Point, and kind'a wanted to give it a shot. I'll be sure to send out photos of this never before seen event of Jim with a mic in front of his face. Thus the team is now K8IV, W0CG, ND8L, K8PGJ, KF4DX, CE3CT, W8WTS, VE4GV and (hopefully) N8NR. We'll do our level best to make you proud.

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.

November: CQWW CW Contest Plans

The code team is stable, including VE3CX, W0CG, KY7M, NA2U, KB7Q, N7IR, N5OT, N7WA, K2PLF, and N0YY. This is a tremendous amount of accumulated talent!!

Ocean Shipment Departs Soon

Many hours of effort and considerable expense have been invested, and finally the ocean shipment departs today. One major component of the cargo has been assembled and built by N7IR. Gary's work will bring about a major improvement in the performance of our RX antennas by adding quality connectors and cabling in the shack, and homebrew common mode chokes both in the shack and at the feedpoints. In addition, Gary has acquired quieter and more efficient DC supplies. Next month's newsletter will feature a technical article from Gary about these innovations.



Above: Part of the N7IR shipment to Curacao, photographed in Arizona on Gary's bench.

Gary has now shipped all of these assets to my W0CG QTH in Ohio, and I have them now prepped for shipment.

On Friday, August 22 my neighbor and CCC member K8IV brought the huge 360 foot length of new LDF4-50A coax to my house. This is a very generous donation from Ed! We uncoiled it on my acreage so that we'd be able to add it to the reel of 400 ft that VE3CX brought to Dayton from Illinois.



Above: Ed's happy that we finally got to the end of the cable and the top of the hill.

We succeeded in doing that, but it required rolling this now very heavy reel up 350 feet of pretty steep ground. Here's Ed, sweaty and breathing hard, but happy that we got it done. We then added two more donated lengths from VE3CX, winding up with a total of 1106 feet of Heliax on the reel. Thanks to Ed, as I absolutely could not have done this alone. The primary driver of the cost of ocean freight is volume, so compacting so much cable on this reel will save significant money as well as protecting the Heliax from damage.

Preparing these shipments is not trivial. It requires unpacking a large number of small boxes shipped in from Amazon, DX Engineering, and many other suppliers, then repacking as compactly and safely as possible. It's critical to keep a careful running packing list in the process.



Above: Packing on a temporary workspace in my garage in Ohio.

This is much more time consuming than one might imagine. The photo is from Wednesday, August 28. Unfortunately, I had by this time fallen far behind on the planned pack schedule. On the 25th I had to drive myself to an Akron ER in a big hurry and get an emergency appendectomy. The infection was so bad

that they kept me in the hospital for two days after, and I didn't get back to the packing job until Wednesday.

After the trip to Marty's I resumed work on the packing which by now was easier because Dorothy was here to help.



Above: Dorothy working with me to put many layers of protective shrink wrap on the Heliax reel.

Below: The tube from AL-1200 (7) happily nestled in an Eimac factory shipping box. This box was then put in our hard-sided Cabbage Case for the trip.



I finally got all the boxes packed and antennas protected and wrapped with more great help from Dorothy, and typed up the packing list from my handwritten notes. At that point all that remained was to print and put the shipping labels on all items and to create the invoice packet. But Murphy stuck again, and on the morning of my 70th birthday party I had to go to an urgent care ER with more problems. After some tests they let me know that my abscess had come back again, bigger and more ferocious than ever. They sent me in a rush to the big ER in Akron, and I was readmitted for four more days of in-patient treatment. Some birthday party.

The exceptional caregivers at the hospital told me that I was very dangerously close to sepsis, and Dorothy

and I had a session one night in my hospital room reviewing wills, trusts, and account numbers in case of the worst.

K8PGJ arrived at the party only to find that I was MIA, and he kindly took the time to put on the 30 shipping labels, not a small job because they have to be carefully glued and taped for protection.

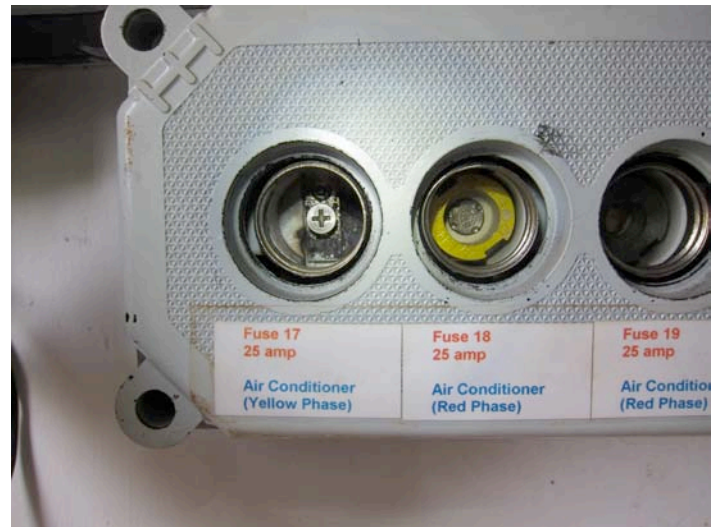
I'm going to be OK and so is the shipment. I spent five hours at my computer building the invoice packet and sent it to the Miami freight forwarder on the 12th. My friend Lynette responded instantly from Miami and said they will be expecting the cargo. In addition to the N7IR RX antenna kit and the AL-1200, this shipment includes all of the coax, wire, transformers, terminators, and additional hardware to build our new and better RX antenna system on the Ridge, up where it will be safe from the bulldozers. The AD8CW-donated Force 12 for our SA multiplier antenna, an A3WS from VE3CX, and Hy-Gain element parts from WI9WI will all be on board.

I go back to Idaho on Saturday after getting badly stiffed by American Airlines because I was in the hospital on my originally planned flight day. My son Adam departs today, September 15 in his minivan to deliver the shipment to Miami. He will stop in Southern Virginia at N0YY's to pick up the 300 foot piece of Heliac that Rick is donating. The club officers approved covering his expenses and a stipend, as this will be cheaper than LTL freight and very much more reliable in keeping the shipment together.

Station Technical Tips

Tip 1: A couple of years ago SM4KYN fixed our old problem of seriously overheated fuses during Multi/Multi operations. The solution was incredibly simple: he sent us some fuse protectors via a friend in Switzerland. In the photo at the right the leftmost fuse socket has no protector, but in the next one to the right the yellow protector is clearly visible. The yellow insulating material stops arcing between the center screw and sleeve. This solution took all of two minutes to install and cost nothing, thanks to Anders.

Prior to installing these gadgets we experienced extreme heating on the fuse box and two small fires. Now? Perfect. If you do smell something too hot from the fuse box, there are replacement insulators on the shelf above the washing machine.



Tip 2: If you're searching for something at Signal Point, keep in mind that EVERYthing of radio interest in the house is shown in our ongoing inventory spreadsheet. You can search the spreadsheet for a keyword and it will tell you precisely where to find your item. Also, the spreadsheet is invaluable in reminding you where to put it back correctly!! We'll be sending everyone a current inventory spreadsheet soon.

SM4KYN's Summer Place

Here's where our member Anders (SM4KYN) and Ingela spend their summers.

This is their long-leased home in Sweden on Lake Vanern, the third largest lake in Europe. Rough stuff: Anders and Ingela are by the water in the summer, and again by the water in winter during their Christmas stays at Signal Point.



About Our W0DX Callsign

In 2000 I lived on St. John, USVI, for five months and was very lucky to get to meet the famed Bob Denniston, W0DX. In 1966 Bob was elected ARRL's

sixth president, and also served as president of IARU until 1972. Thus, during my early years as a licensee, he was somewhere near to a deity to me. Bob is credited as the inventor of the DXpedition as the leader of the 1949 VP7NG “Gon-Waki” expedition to the Bahamas. Bob is credited with leading the campaign that saved 160 meters for amateur use. He was a highly successful Iowa businessman, owning over two dozen lumberyards in the Midwest. That’s Bob on the left when he was still W0NWX in the early sixties.



I owe the privilege of knowing Bob to our CCC member Jim Livengood, then KP2L and now W0NB. Jim lived on St. John and had managed to get to know Mr. Denniston, who by then had been retired for many years in the British Virgin Islands. Bob had decided to go native, and lived on the north shore of Tortola in an unbelievably rustic and classically Caribbean situation at Smuggler’s Cove. By the time I met him he had gone full bore native, with a long tangled white beard (photo in the next column) and his ever-present pith helmet. During my stay in the V.I. I had the incomparable thrill of operating a contest with Bob signing VP2VI, taking turns at a Multi/Single station with low power and a terrible wire antenna in the palms. I even got to use his personal Vibroplex bug.

Bob passed away in his sleep in 2002 after an incredibly colorful life of varied accomplishments. At that time Jim, W0NB, worked carefully with Bob’s kids Carol and Matt and ultimately secured their permission to transfer his famous callsign to CCC. We have a stock of commemorative W0DX QSLs but have not in all of this time activated his callsign. Imagine what fun it would be to run a CCC contest, possibly CW SS, signing W0DX, one of the most famous calls in the history of our hobby.



Above: Bob Denniston, W0DX, VP2VI at his home for many years on Tortola.

Grass Does Not Grow Under K8PGJ’s Feet

Editor’s Note: I have lust for Dodge Challengers, particularly orange ones. I stumbled on this photo that Pete had sent me long ago and asked for the explanation. That follows.



This photo was taken on June 18, 2008, 3 days after the 24 Hours of Le Mans Road Race at Le Mans, France.

I was the assistant Launch Manager for the Challenger and was the SRT Powertrain Manager. All the 2008 Challengers had my 6.1L Hemi Powertrains in them. As we launched the car in April, I was given the cushy job of going to Europe with two of the Challengers and Motor Trend Magazine's Editors for a Lap of Europe.

We started down in Italy, and went to a very early F1 track in France where the Movie "Grand Prix" was shot that had been taken over by the elements. We then arrived 3 days before the Historic Le Mans Race and had arranged an hour of time to do Hot Laps on the track. No helmets, No real seat belts, flat out. In fact, I was making cell phone calls back to the states with my foot on the floor. We left Le Mans and went to Normandy, saw the beaches, took the ferry to Portsmouth, I pick up the Wife who had flown over for a short vacation and went off to the Goodwood Speed Festival where the Challengers were given the celebrity treatment and Motor Trend guys raced one of them up the course at Goodwood.

Then to ship them back, Wifey had to drive one of the left hand drive cars, by herself, on the wrong side of the road from Goodwood thru the streets of London straight into an enclosed car hauler, double parked at our hotel and waiting for us just like a scene out of James Bond.

The other neat thing that happened on that trip was that I got to meet up with a Rally Barracuda that an engineer from Chrysler had won with the US Rally Championship back in the 60's. It was sold to another Rallyist who took it to England, wounded the engine, I got him a new fully prepped engine circa the 60's, of course very legal, and he and John Buffum had won the historic Monte Carlo rally that year. Hence the trophies. And Motor Trend Magazine used it in the article as it was the sister car to the new Generation of Challengers.

Don't Leave Gel Earpads in Curacao

K8ND learned an important lesson that he's passing on to all of us. He has started using gel earpads, which are comfortable and do a great job of keeping out ambient noise. He left them in his kit at Signal Point, and they didn't do well in the ambient heat when the house is closed up, exploding into a gooey mess as the photo below shows.



Above: Exploded gel earpads after storage at PJ2T.

Member Spotlight

Jeff Maass, K8ND

When I was a kid, I attended house auctions around town with my parents, and one of the few things I bought for myself was an old wooden-cased radio, full of tubes and covering the shortwave bands. I spent many hours in the basement tweaking the knobs and listening for far-away stations.



I recall leafing through a Lafayette Radio catalog, and marveling at the many things there, but it wasn't until high school that I discovered Amateur Radio. Upper

Arlington High School had a 30-foot tower with tribander and a station (K8HHF) installed in the physics lab. Also there were bound volumes of QST magazine, and I spent time reading through them, especially looking for humorous articles by John Troster W6ISQ.

I spent time learning CW in a huge, empty classroom in a new section of the school, spending an inordinate amount of time trying to recall the difference between 'F' and 'L'. I carried an old Ameco license study guide everywhere I went. In 1971, my 'Elmer', physics teacher Gus Bowman K8EDQ (sk) gave me my Novice exam, and I was licensed as WN8JXS!

My first novice station was a DX60B (with three TX crystals, for 40- and 15-meters) and Radio Shack DX-120 SWL receiver on which the 40-meter band was 1/1000 of a turn of the tuning knob! A Heath HR-10B soon followed.

I was a Boy Scout at the time, and our troop raised money by selling candy door-to-door. One day, I was walking through Upper Arlington, and found a house with a large tower and multiple antennas! I knocked on the door, and looked through the foyer into a room with more radio equipment than I had ever seen! I introduced myself with my Novice callsign, and found that it was the home of John WB8AKU (sk) (later W8JG) and his son John WB8AKW, who were setting up their station for a Sweepstakes weekend! I later realized that I was looking at Signal One CX7 transceiver and an Alpha 77DX amplifier! I was very impressed!

More study guides, a trip to the ratty old storefront in downtown Columbus that FCC took over for exams (with my Vibroplex bug), and I came back with my Advanced class license in the next year, with call WB8JXS.

My first contest was Field Day with the Upper Arlington HS club, with me and one other student operating from K8EDQ's shed in Hilliard Ohio. My only memories of that operation were 1) we stood up as the radio was on a belly-high workbench, 2) it was very chilly overnight, and 3) I was the only one to stay all night trying to make QSOs on 80 meters.

At the station at home, I replaced the HR-10B with a National NC-300 (a BIG improvement) and my first SSB transmitter, a Hallicrafters HT-32B. It was about this time that I got involved with the Central Ohio AREC group, and participated in their very active series of public service events. For this, I added 2M

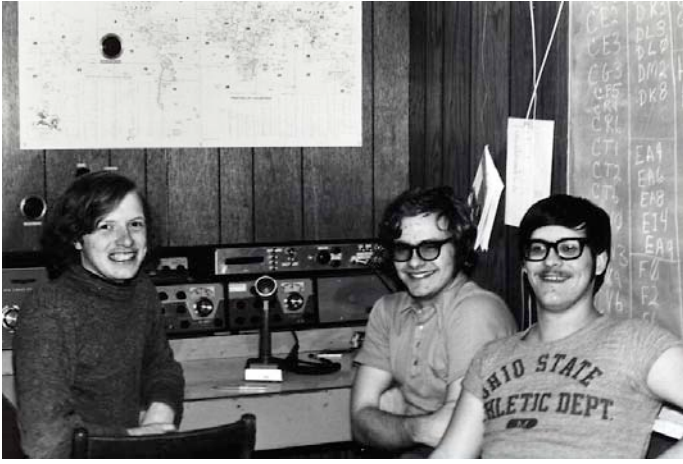
and (eventually) 220-MHz FM radios. I set up a station at our summer place at Buckeye Lake (with call WB8SWM), and operated traffic nets and worked DX there all summer while assisting my Grandfather after his cataract surgery.

With college at OSU came THE Amateur Radio Club of THE Ohio State University W8LT. The station was in the Southeast Tower on the C-deck level of Ohio Stadium, immediately below the bell tower! We installed a Cubex quad on a short tower between the flagpoles on the bell tower, and there was a 500-foot-longwire up 100-feet, run across the parking lot to the smokestack of the University's power plant. It was fed with open wire feedline. Radios when I arrived were BC-610E, Viking Ranger, Collins 75A4, and a TR3 (IIRC). By the time I left W8LT, we had Drake C-Line and a SB-220.



I organized a few large Central Ohio ARES events, including a couple years for the Tour of the Scioto Valley 2-day 210-mile bicycle event, and a couple of years for the Amateur Radio exhibit at the Ohio State Fair ('WO8HIO', 'KO8HIO'). I was deployed to Xenia Ohio with Red Cross for the 1974 tornado, handing 'Health & Welfare' traffic outgoing from the YMCA building in downtown Xenia for 3 or 4 days. At W8LT, we were all very active with AREC public service activities.

We also became very active in contesting. I was first pressed into contest service there in ARRL SS, CQ WPX, CQWW, and soon thereafter the ARRL 160-Meter Contest, which became my favorite. Initially, we operated from the OSU Stadium, using a Kytoon-supported ¼-wave vertical and the 500-foot longwire. With contesting came more study and passing my Extra license exam at the newer FCC Civil Service centers downtown. The Extra allowed me to pick my new callsign, K8ND.



Above: K1LT (WA1LKU), K8LT (WB8IBZ) and K8ND (WB8JXS) at W8LT, WPX 1975.

We soon started operating that contest from the grounds of the 'Big Ear', the Ohio State Radio Observatory north of Columbus. The Director of the Observatory was the well-known John Kraus W8JK (sk) and the Vice Director was Bob W8ERD (who had also been the Emergency Coordinator for Central Ohio AREC/ARES). In return for us doing some chores around the grounds, they shut down the sensitive telescope for the weekend and let us use the site for the contest.



Above: W8JK at the Big Ear

At that site, we had a 2-acre aluminum ground plane to use under our 1/4-wave (later 5/8-wave) Kytoon-supported vertical. We also had room for 4 2-wire Beverages, and I learned there that they are magical lowband tools! In all these years, W8LT was always in the Top 5 Multi-Op stations. I wrote the QST article which was the basis for the report on the 1975 ARRL 160 results, showing the Kytoon and activities at the Radio Observatory.

Results, Sixth Annual ARRL 160-Meter Contest

More new records despite poor conditions.

By Jeff Maass,* WB8JXS and Jim Cain,** WA1STN

Although generally conceded that conditions were poor for the sixth ARRL 160 Contest, December 6-7, 1975, a new single-operator all-time record was still set by K1PBW. Considerable propagation for the U.S. and Canada was certainly worse than in past years. The number of foreign entries was down markedly, reflecting the rotten conditions around the world. 306 entries this year is less than 50 percent of the stations known to have been active in the contest, but it is still a fair showing, although not when compared to 354 in 1974. We present herewith a story about the Ohio State University Amateur Radio Club, W8LT, and their 160-Meter Contest exploits, narrated by Jeff Maass, WB8JXS, in hopes that you will find it as we did: interesting reading. Good things seem to come in bunches. . . K4DBZ sent us a story about his 160-Meter Contest expedition to Florida's No-Name Key, with W4OZF. We're saving that one, to print (we hope) in November QST, along with the rules for the 1976 160-Meter Contest. Just goes to prove one thing: Be careful what you send to the Contest Corner, because you just might end up seeing it printed in your magazine!

The 160 contest has long been a favorite of the operators at W8LT, since we usually do better, relatively, in this contest than most of the others. There's a bit of tradition, too. We were the number one multioperator station in the first ARRL 160 Contest, and we have been in the top ten each year since then, even though we have never again taken first.

*4419 Norwell Dr., Columbus, OH 43220
**Asst. Communications Mgr., ARRL

The station has changed since that first contest: In 1970 we had a BC610E, 75A4, Ranger II, and a five hundred foot longwire up 100 feet. In 1974 we began our major station upgrades, powered by money loaned by several of the members. (The university pays our phone bill and insurance. No money for equipment whatsoever!)
The station for the 1974 contest was a Drake C-Line, and WA1LKU's modified SB220.

Antennas, always a favorite subject on 160, have undergone a lot of development and trial at W8LT. The evolution has gone from a kite, which broke loose, never to be seen again; to a balloon, which couldn't cope with the

up-and-down drafts surrounding the football stadium which houses W8LT; to the now-famous kitoon. The kitoon is a small (12-foot long) airframe which is filled with hydrogen and/or helium to support a wire. For two years (1972-73) the wire was a quarter-wave vertical over a groundplane at 110 feet, and in 1974 the antenna was expanded to a five-eighths-wave vertical.

Could You Play Football At Our Observatory?

The long wire was available for all of the contests, and several dipoles were tried at various times, supported by the flagpoles which top the stadium. But we weren't satisfied by the performance



During those days, I also became active with the Mad River Radio Club (MRR), and served as 'Big Fish' (President) and edited the postal-mailed newsletter (remember those?). I remained active with ARES, and became active with traffic handling in the Ohio Section of ARRL.

After leaving OSU, I applied for a few local jobs and one most definitely not local. I applied for the open job of running the Contest Desk at ARRL! They flew me out for an interview, and I stayed at the home of Jim Cain WA1STN (later K1TN) and Rosalie WA1STO (later K1STO). They had a KLM 4-element 40-meter yagi, and I was introduced to why the stations on the East Coast had such an advantage: Europe was S9 +20 on 40 at 2 PM in the afternoon! I toured ARRL HQ and W1AW, and interviewed with George Hart

WINJM (sk), the Communications Manager of ARRL and others. I did not get the job (lost to Tom K1KI, who had just finished a tour in Antarctica), and am very grateful that I didn't start my career working in Connecticut, where the cost-of-living was outrageous for a lowly ARRL employee!

Back in Columbus, I had two job offers (CompuServe and Industrial Nucleonics), and I took the one at Industrial Nucleonics where I had Amateur Radio friends from my ARES activities! The day that was to be my first day at work was the 'Blizzard of 1978', with snowdrifts as much as 10-feet high! Work was cancelled, and I foolishly drove my VW Bug close behind snowplows to Red Cross HQ in downtown Columbus, where I stayed on the radio for two days. While working at IN/CE/ABB, I continued my ARES activities and contesting. I established a partnership with Joe AD8I (now W4TV), who had a small farm in Circleville, South of Columbus. He had space, and I had disposable income, so we built a 3-tower contest station there which was active for many years. Included was a 4-element KLM 40-meter yagi at 100-feet and monobanders for the other bands. It was an active station for several years.

As part of my Mad River Radio Club involvement, I planned a MRRC 'Contest Expedition' for ARRL CW in 1979. We discussed going to the Tonga (their Sunday laws made contesting there inadvisable), then looked at Turks & Caicos, for which I actually applied for and received a license: VP5MRX. We eventually settled on French St. Martin, which had not been very active in contests at that time. Along with Jim K8MR, John AD8J, John K8BPX, and Jeff WD8ALG (later KU8E), we applied for our licenses from Paris and waited for our new FG0 callsigns. We ended up using the call of local amateur Alain FG7AR as FG7AR/FS7, and placed first M-S in the World with our 100-watt station in a hotel, with a new record that held for several years! My call FG0AMR was finally issued *during* our trip.

In 1980, I organized another 'contest DXpedition', and this time we went across the water to Anguilla, which was even less common on-the-air than St. Martin at the time. I was issued the callsign VP2E for contests, which I held for four years. For personal use, I was initially issued VP2EEV, and later received VP2EV. We returned for various contests in 1981 and 1982, with the 1982 trip including both ARRL CW and SSB Contests, placing first Multi-Single in the World in both. The 1982 VP2E SSB result was included in the December 1990 CQ Magazine article 'Great Moments

in Sport' for making 10,000+ QSOs in the 1982 ARRL SSB DX Contest!



**VP2E 1982
Contest Expedition to Anguilla**

STATION	DATE	UTC	BAND	MODE	RST
	FEB 1982		160 80 40	2X CW	599
	MAR 1982		20 15 10	2X SSB	59

Worldwide Multi-Operator, Single Transmitter Champions

ARRL CW DX Contest: 5,699,970 Points - 6,129 QSO's - 310 Mults.
Ops: K8ND, K8MR, K8CV, AD8J, WORLX, WB6SHD

ARRL SSB DX Contest: 9,567,666 Points - 10,029 QSO'S - 318 Mults.
Ops: K8ND, K8CV, WB8DQP, WB8VPA, WB6SHD, AA4NC, Joy Hayes

CQ 160 Meter SSB DX Contest: 276,160 Points - 446 QSO'S - 64 Mults.
Ops: K8ND, WB8DQP

Our thanks to Mr. V. M. Hodge, Telecommunications Officer for Anguilla.

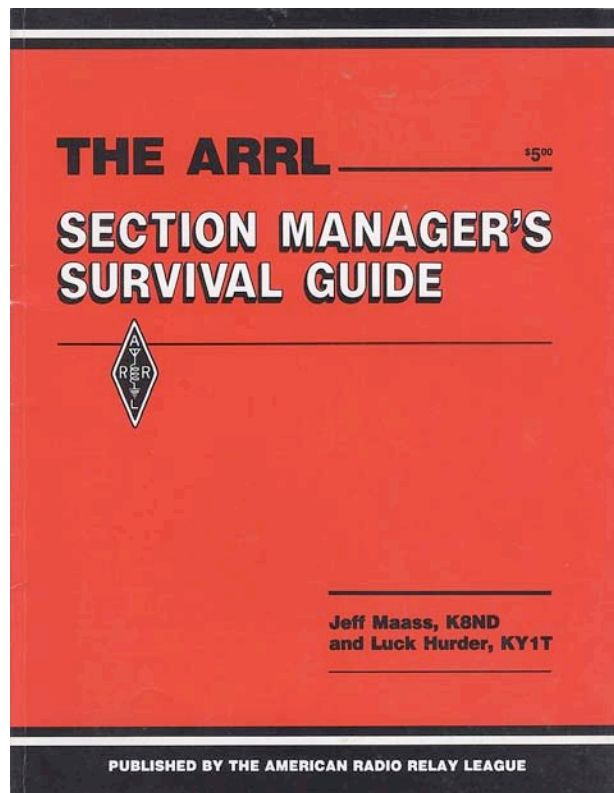
751019

Somewhere along the line, I met Tom W8TK, who lived around the corner from my parents' house. This will come into play later in my tale. In 1983 I bought a house and got married, and that put an end to my series of early DX trips.

I created, with Bob KD8KY, the Central Ohio Traffic net (COTN) a daily local NTS net on 2-meter FM that is still in operation. I was also active traffic handling on the Ohio Section nets (BN, OSN, OSSBN). In 1984, I was elected ARRL Section Manager (SM) for the Ohio Section, and served for two terms (1984-88). SMs (formerly SCM) are responsible for

managing of all ARRL Field Organization programs in their section, including ARES, government liaison, affiliated clubs, NTS, Public Information, and Official Observer. The SM appoints managers for each program, and oversees their activities. Ohio was and is the largest of the ARRL Sections. I spent much time traveling to hamfests around the State and manning an ARRL booth, selling books and the League. During my term, in those pre-Internet days, I also established *The Ohio Section Newsletter*, Ohio ARES districts, and a Section Conference (first one held at the Columbus Zoo!), all of which still exist.

There was little guidance on how to do the job of ARRL Section Manager, so I wrote a book, "The ARRL Section Manager's Survival Guide", which was published by ARRL in 1988. I don't know how long this was published and provided to each newly-elected SM. I have a copy, which I'm sure is rare and so which will finance my retirement when I finally sell it on eBay!



In the 1990s I spent much of my energy running USPSA/IPSC practical shooting competitions at a club in Circleville Ohio, and competing in several handgun sports. I continued some radio contesting, especially ARRL 160 Meter Contest with old W8LT partner Victor K1LT.

I was at Industrial Nucleonics for 23 years (through name changes to Combustion Engineering and ABB)

before moving on to my current employer (LayerZero Power Systems) in 2001, having been recruited by co-owner Jim W8WTS. LayerZero was a brand-new startup company. We were working 7-day weeks, 18-20 hours a day for a year or so, so there was no 'spare time' for radio or shooting.

It was at this point that I received an invitation to join CCC at the recommendation of Tom W8TK. I joined CCC, but did not make a trip to Signal Point until November 2002. At that time, I was the only CCC member who had never been to Curacao!

My first contest at PJ2T was the 2002 CQWW CW, for which I was the 160-meter operator. The 160-meter station was relegated to the West porch (see photo), which was really quite nice in the evening breeze in those pre-air-conditioning days!



Above: K8ND at the 160 meter position on the west porch in CQWW CW 2002.

PJ2T was #5 Multi-Multi that year, and on 160 had 481Q/15Z/31C.

In 2003, I convinced my friend and employer Jim W8WTS to join CCC, and he started joining us for CQWW CW operations. Most years since 2007, W8WTS and I have teamed-up as PJ2T for the CQWW 160-Meter CW Contest. We finished 1st in the World 2014, 2015, and 2016. I finished 1st Single-Op Assisted in 2012 and 1st Single-op in 2013. We have never finished worse than 3rd in the Word in Multi-Op category. We still hold the South America records for Multi-Op (2009), and Single Op High Power (2013, K8ND opr). Plaques are on the wall next to the West bedroom door.

In 2003, I brought down a couple Pennant/Flag RX antennas and a bit later a K9AY array. We used these

for a few years on the lowbands. The pennant parts are still at Signal Point, but the K9AY did not work well and was brought back to the USA. In 2005, Gary K9SG and I donated a DX Engineering 4-Square RX antenna system. With multiple receive antennas to select from, I developed the RX antenna switching scheme using K9AY RAS-8x2 switches, first with signals routed to two stations, and later to all four. I was familiar with this nice switch, having owned one myself.

As a part of our CQWW 160 operations starting in 2009, we incorporated the use of CW Skimmers, with one Skimmer on each receive antenna, looking for stations on the band and sending the spots to the bandmap. I now own seven SDR-IQ receivers and a Perseus receiver, and Jim W8WTS has purchased a few SDR-IQs as well.



Above: SDRs and one of the laptops for the contest weekend skimmer system created by W8WTS and K8ND.

With W8WTS, in 2010, we created and installed the PJ2A Skimmer Server at the Red Cross building in Willemstad, to help spot active stations in CW contests. We later relocated the Skimmer Server to PJ2KC's business, where it lives in an air conditioned computer room and has a much taller tower! You can see what it is hearing on the Reverse Beacon Network (RBN) site at <http://www.reversebeacon.net/dxsd1/dxsd1.php?f=0&c=PJ2A&t=de>. The spots from the Skimmer Server are also routed to the contest software bandmap to allow the best possible spotting of multipliers.



In 2010, when Curacao became an independent country in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and a new DXCC entity on October 10, 2010, Bill W9VA and I traveled down for an initial '10-10-10' operation at PJ2T. It was a wild period of big pileups and 100-degree shack temperatures in those pre-AC days! We made 14278 QSOs during the first week of Curacao as a new country.

In my early years coming to the island, I did some bird photography and created a web site 'Curacao Critters' (<http://www.k8nd.com/CuracaoCritters.htm>). Although I haven't updated the web site in a dozen years, I still take my birding camera gear and do some bird photography when on the island.

Several years ago, I decided to collect 100 different QSL cards from old Curacao operations, to place in wall-hangers and donate to the Curacao club VERONA. With QSLs from my own collection and those found and bought on eBay, I soon overtook the 100 number, and realized that the wall-hangers would likely not be the best way to use the history reflected in the QSL. So, purchased some 'digital picture frames', and created a slideshow for them. These were initially donated to VERONA, PJ2T, Jossy PJ2MI, and the Bureau of Telecommunications & Posts. The number of Curacao QSLs in my collection is now 642 different designs! The slideshow is now also available online at <http://www.k8nd.com/Radio/CuracaoQSLs/index.html>. I have spent some of my free time on the island visiting and photographing cemeteries on Curacao.

My 'Curacao Cemetery' project grew out of a similar project near my home in Ohio. When I started, I found no list of the cemeteries on the island, so I made my own list through online research and word-of-mouth interviews. This project has given me the incentive to get me out of the station and explore and visit far corners of the island. Thus far, I've visited/photographed 33 or the 56 Curacao cemeteries

and burial sites I've identified. I recently started revisiting some of the ones I'd photographed earlier to photograph them with the drones. Curacao Cemeteries: <http://curacaocemeteries.com/>.

Somewhere along the way, I decided that I might like to retire to Curacao, and I started researching what was required to get residence status on the island. As you might expect, there is much paperwork in Dutch to be completed, much documentation of my life in Ohio, some interviews, some money for some legal help with the process, and much waiting for things to happen. Recent court cases made the process for USA citizens easier than in the past, and I finally received my final approval on 7 July 2016. Once that was accomplished, I was able to apply for a PJ2 callsign, and after much Dutch paperwork, some money, and much waiting for things to happen, I was issued PJ2ND effective January 20, 2017. Family responsibilities keep me from any serious planning for relocation, but I have established a bank account on the island (that is another story of Dutch bureaucracy) to allow me to pay fees and make local purchases!

When Gene KB7Q set up the remote station at Signal Point, I wanted to make use of it and purchased an Elecraft K3/0 to dedicate to my end of the remote. I purchased a KPA500 amplifier and KAT500 tuner to make the remote station at Signal Point more capable, and I've used the remote to make over 13000 QSOs since 2017, and to participate in and win a couple of contests!

Over the years, I have averaged two trips a year to Signal Point, including contest operations in CQWW CW, ARRL SSB, ARRL 160, Stew Perry Topband DX Challenge, IARU HF Championships, and CQWW 160-Meter CW Contests. My interest has always been primarily in the low bands, primarily 160 Meters. My trip this past July was my 36th trip to Curacao! All told, I have made over 85000 QSOs as PJ2/K8ND or PJ2ND since my first visit to Signal Point in 2002!

Next year will represent my 50th year as a Radio Amateur!

THE END:

