



Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium

Editor: W0CG

Volume 20, Number 10

October 15, 2020

Curacao Travel Update and Outlook for CQWW Contests - Fuggitaboutit

As I write this on September 29 it appears that we have been relieved of the stress of deciding whether to contest in CQWW SSB and CW. There are no flights. Even if we decided to risk a team-based contest operation, we can't get to the island.

From my study of AA.com, there are no flights from the U.S. to Curacao in October. In November on certain sparse dates (November 4, 18, and a few others) there are flights to the island via Guatemala City and an overnight in Bogata, with the final leg to Curacao on Avianca, for the modest airfare of \$3300 economy.

And that begs the question of whether we can even get admitted to the island after originating in the U.S. According to the latest rules (September 17 update) from this link, it's not possible to gain entry to the country.

<https://www.curacao.com/en/questions/health-and-vaccinations/response-to-novel-coronavirus-covid-19>

The U.S. is still classified by Curacao as a high-risk COVID country, so even if we were allowed in we would have to have a no older than 72 hour negative PCR test and then go into 14 day quarantine. That would be at our expense in a government approved facility, and there don't appear to be any exceptions for travelers staying at private homes.

Therefore we continue to pay the price for our country's poor response to the pandemic. Travelers are permitted into Curacao from Austria, Canada, China, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Guyana, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, Turks and Caicos, Uruguay, and the United Kingdom. Also, arrivals from nearly all of the

Caribbean islands can go to Curacao except Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

We do have CCC members in Canada (VA7AM and VE3CX) and Germany (DL8OBQ and DF9LJ), but at present it does not make good medical or logistical sense for any of them to risk traveling to the island just to activate the station in the WW contests. So our 20th Anniversary celebration will be nil.



Things look better as time goes by. Normal flights to the island presently show up on the AA.com schedule beginning December 4. The connections are good and airfares reasonable. Whether these occur, though, will obviously depend on whether congress comes through with more relief for the airline industry, what Curacao decides to do about admitting travelers, the ever-growing availability of affordable rapid testing capability and, possibly, who wins the U.S. presidential election. For now we are off the air, and I can't even go to W0CG to run my own station in the contests because of my son's occupancy there. Im trapped in a ham radio desert.

KB7Q in August CQ

Check out the photo below from page 80 of the August issue of CQ. This appeared in the "VHF Plus" column edited by K8ZR. Gene was operating 2 meter meteor scatter while parked on the line between grids DN56 and DN88. He and Joyce do an immense amount of driving and camping, and the radio is always an important part of these trips. The photo is from

somewhere northeast of Billings, Montana, between Nowhere and Nothingville. No virus masks required here.



Photo E. Gene Shea, KB7Q, operating 2-meter meteor scatter on the DN56/DN66 grid line. (Photo courtesy KB7Q)

Gene is the ‘complete’ ham operator because he’s equally at home doing VHF contesting, EME, digital modes, remote operation, homebrewing, and handling huge 40 meter CW contest pileups from Europe at very high CW speeds.

CCCs in the Scores

Pick up any magazine, any contest summary article, and you will find CCC members prominent in the results listings. For example I informally read through the 2020 160 Meter Contest results in August CQ and found several of our family in print.

Here’s Lee (KY7M) listed as Zone 3 winner in the CW high power multi-op category.

U.S.A. Zone 3
Lee Finkel KY7M
NA7TB
(KY7M, NA2U, KC7V, AA7A ops)
Donor: Tom Whitted, N7GP

Continuing his tradition of generosity to others, our VE3CX (Tom) is the plaque donor for the Canada winner in multi-op high power.

Canada
Peter Barron
VE3PN
Donor: Tom Haavisto, VE3CX

Showing up again as a winner, KY7M took SSB honors in Zone 3 as a multi-op.

Zone 3
Lee Finkel
N7T
(KY7M, N7NR, KC7V @NA7TB ops)
Donor: Paulo, PV8DX

Below is our former many years member Jack (N4RV) dominating Virginia in the CW Single Op Assisted Category.

	VIRGINIA			
N4RV	649,306	1203	57	76
K4XL	581,406	1036	56	71
WS6X	439,125	870	56	69
W3IP	297,965	696	52	63
W4PK	263,304	646	51	55
N3UA	216,134	512	47	59
N3CW	191,586	512	54	57
W3YY	183,261	490	51	60

And next here’s Jack doing the same thing again, this time in SSB Assisted!

	VIRGINIA			
N4RV	164,410	804	55	27
K4XL	135,660	698	53	23
W3IP	74,958	499	47	15
K1GG	40,194	237	52	14
KK4ODQ	22,280	250	34	6
KC4D	22,078	274	38	0
KG4W	18,800	98	28	22
KE4S	18,495	148	34	11

And of course last (and best) in the 160 contest we must highlight the usual fabulous performance by Jeff and Jim (K8ND and W8WTS) who piloted PJ2T to CW 5th World. PJ2T was the only non-Europe station in the Top 10 in this category. (Europe has a dramatic location advantage.)

MULTI-OPERATOR WORLD	
IG9/S59A.....	2,941,390
TCØX.....	2,746,668
P33W.....	2,730,192
OK7K.....	2,153,792
PJ2T.....	2,141,644

Turning to the WPX SSB contest results from September CQ, here in an example of self-torture, Jim sits atop the U.S. results for 80 Meter Single-op Assisted. PJ2T was not on the air for this one because the pandemic had by this time forced us off the bands.

Single Op 3.7 MHz Low Power Assisted

W8WTS	10,890
W6RW.....	1,972

These are just a few examples of CCCers prominent in the contest scores. Apologies to those that I missed in this quick visual scan of recently published results. Our profile in the contest world continues to be very high.

Don't Forget: You're a VERONA Member

Keep in mind that if you're a member of CCC, then automatically you're a member of VERONA, Curacao's amateur radio club. Each year we collect \$28.57 (50 guilders) at CCC membership renewal time, and forward that money to VERONA for membership renewal. Many of us have attended VERONA meetings on the island over the years, and they are a group of very friendly, extremely astute ladies and gentlemen who make us feel completely welcome.

From their web site <http://www.verona-club.eu> :

VERONA is the country's IARU representative. The club was founded back in 1948. It has around 40 members, 25 of them living permanently on the island. Among other activities, we are active in emergency communication, be it on the island or helping elsewhere. The name VERONA derived from its original Dutch name "Vereniging Radio Onderzoek Nederlandse Antillen". After dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles, the name was kept.

As you may see from their web site, there are sophisticated technical capabilities available on Curacao thanks to VERONA.

- An analog repeater with Echolink in Willemstad near the Koningin Julianabrug
- A D-Star repeater near Santa Catherina
- An analog+C4FM repeater near Westpunt. Callsign **PJ2PZ**, QRG: 146.700MHz -600kHz * 100Hz (This repeater has a large footprint, you may reach Aruba P4 and Venezuela YV.)
- A DMR/D-Star repeater in Willemstad
- **APRS** is available throughout the island on 145.050 MHz. (Some iGates are rx-only, so you will not always receive a receipt on VHF.)
- WX information from the Caribbean region is broadcasted through APRS as well.
- **PACLINK**: 1k2 AFSK Packet access to the Winlink

system running **on top of APRS**. This service is located near Santa Catherina. Connect PJ2A-10.

Additional details about these capabilities are available on the VERONA web site.



The Exterminator Debugged Us on Sept 23

Fundraiser for Zoom

In late August while on a WhatsApp video chat with Zoom at his home, it became apparent to me that that night's dinner for his family was the pan of white rice that I saw on the stove in the background. Period. Just the rice. He was not complaining (never does), did not ask for assistance, but did outline that all of his sources of income had dried up in the pandemic, and that he wasn't quite sure how to proceed.

From those comments, offered merely in passing, he rapidly changed the subject to the topic of getting an exterminator to Signal Point and tackling the overwhelming attack of ants in the foliage and around the house. Typical Zoom: all about us and nothing about him.



Photo by SM4KYN

You know the rest. I have never before asked the CCC family to assist Zoom, but it seemed that this terrible period of extreme COVID-induced stress was the time. I figured out how to create a GoFundMe campaign (easy) and made my appeal to you for help for Zoom.

I have been utterly stunned, in a wonderfully embarrassing way, by your generous response. As I write this we have generated about \$2500 for Zoom, and the funds have been sent to the island. When I explained this to him he laughed and thought I was kidding, but when the money landed in his bank account it became very real and he became very speechless. Imagine Zoom speechless!?! Many of you accompanied your donations with reminders of kindness that Zoom has extended to you in the past, and that you appreciated a chance to help him tangibly.

Zoom is on the job, carefully monitoring and protecting our radio shack in the tropics. We would be lost without him, and I thank you again for your magnificent kindness to him.

Signal Point's Epic Water (Money) Leak

One of the largest terrors of having real estate overseas is runaway water usage. The excerpt from the utility bill for August shows that we got nailed by just that. Even though the QTH is shut down, the meter showed 95 cubic meters of water used, for a billed amount of NAfl 1567.24. That's \$895.56.

As soon as I got off the floor and got the heart paddles and reactivated myself, I got in touch with Dirk across the street and asked him to check if the water meter was running. He reported that it was not, thank goodness. He also reported that he had observed Zoom on occasion turning on the irrigation water at Signal Point and then going to the other houses to work. Whatever the explanation, someone clearly turned on the valve outside the laundry room and then forgot about it for a long time. I had no choice but to pay this giant bill or Aqualectra would turn off our connections. Dollars down the drain, almost literally.

Aqualectra N.V. - Rector Zwijssenstraat 1 - PO BOX 230, Curacao - WWW.AQUALECTRA.COM PHONE: +5999 462-2000 FAX: +5999 462-6665 INFO@AQUALECTRA.COM KVK Number: 145740 Crib Number: 102474620																																			
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We still love Zoom, and are still very glad to be able to give him some assistance, and all I can say is welcome to my world as owner of real estate that's 4000 miles away and now totally unreachable and unmaintainable because of the pandemic.

W8WTS' August Treasury Balance

Here's the end of month balance. Last month's optimistic number was in error. \$4459.03

Construction of the Ridge Tribander (Incredible Video)

In September 2013 I was joined on the island by Uli (DL8OBQ), Andy (W9NJY), Jason (NR0X), and Wayne (K8LEE SK) to tackle the project of replacing the Ridge tribander and installing our new triplexer system, among other antenna projects. The antenna changeout was necessary because the existing Ridge antenna had traps, which would vaporize once we pushed three bands of full power into that antenna all at once. K2PLF donated his trapless new-in-box Bencher Skyhawk, I shipped it to the island, and we were off and running.

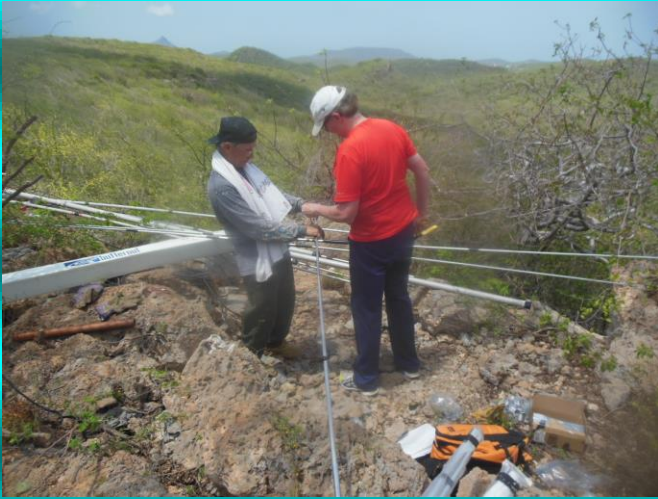
Here's Uli beginning to piece together the antenna on Mike Maley's porch.



Uli Thielke, DL8OBQ, September 7, 2013 with the Bencher Ridge tribander in assembly.

This was a trial assembly because there was no way we would have been able to get the antenna to the Ridge intact. This required making several trips to the Ridge with bundles of tubing, boxes of hardware, bags of tools and, most important, the assembly instructions for the tribander. This turned out to be an extremely taxing project because of the extreme heat and sun exposure at the Ridge site. Here I am with Uli measuring twice and riveting once, carefully piecing the antenna together. There were a LOT of parts.

made it happen, celebrating at a relaxing lunch at Kadushi Cliffs hotel, Westpunt, on September 18.



W0CG and DL8OBQ on the Ridge, riveting pieces of the Ridge tribander, September 8, 2013.

Next came the challenge of getting the antenna onto the tower. The crowded working conditions required that the tribander be assembled in place in the air. This next photo, shot by Andy, W9NJY, shows Jason and me mounting elements on the director end of the boom.



Andy (W9NJY), Jason (NR0X), Wayne (K8LEE SK), Uli (DL8OBQ).

Possibly the best indicator of this successful project is Andy's wattmeter, showing 4181 watts in progress up to the Ridge tribander, at an attractive SWR, 10, 15, and 20 meters transmitting concurrently. This thing works.



NR0X and W0CG installing elements.

From there Jason went up the tower and began the heroic endeavor of assembling the rest of the antenna in place. He had the foresight to record the whole thing from his GoPro camera mounted above the antenna looking down, and this video is the result, capturing hours of hot work in 38 seconds of drastically accelerated motion. Thanks to Jason for unearthing this and sending the link seven years hence.

<https://youtu.be/Wj-TU2LMzxs>

As you're well aware, the Ridge tribander and triplexer have been a giant PJ2T success. Here's the crew that



Curacao News Sources (K8ND)

Jeff (K8ND) is by far our best source of timely information about what's going on in Curacao. He recently shared his secrets with us via E-mail, and here are those links reproduced.

Curacao Chronicle:

<https://www.curacaochronicle.com/home/> (This one also posts to Facebook.)

Curacao News: <https://curacao.nu/> (This one sends a daily email of links to new stories.)

Facebook Group: 'You Know You've Lived In Curacao If...'

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/17257577140>

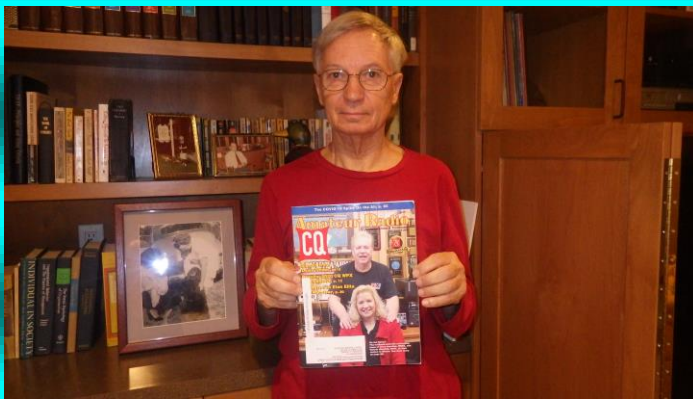
Curacao Circus: (An interesting blog of personal observations on news from the island)

<http://www.vrcurassow.com/2dvrc/stateofaffairs/circus/2020.html>

He warns that some of these are in Dutch, but his browser (MS Edge) translates them automatically for him.

More CCCers Prominently in the News

This is as good as it gets: the cover of *CQ*.



W0CG at home in Idaho with Jerry and Val on the cover of September *CQ*.

Jerry (WB9Z) was a very highly active member of CCC for many years. In that time he operated on many contest teams, and he and his ex-wife for several years spent long Christmas holiday stays of many weeks at Signal Point.

He is at home on the air or on the towers. You can read about his company, Midwest Antenna Systems, at:

http://midwestantenna.com/main/page_home.html .

Needless to say, it was immensely reassuring to me to have a seasoned experienced expert as a CCC member, and I learned a great deal about the tower business from Jerry. And he was never shy about getting involved in the dirty work, including tower painting, as you see below.



Jerry (WB9Z) giving me the paintbrush salute after a tower painting session at PJ2T, December 20, 2003.

Over time he and I perfected our technique, working vertically one above the other on the towers, each with sandpaper, wire brushes, and a bucket of epoxy paint, systematically and efficiently maintaining the towers.

Around about 2007 Jerry and I concurrently found ourselves in the unenviable situation of having unhappy spouses who sought to move on to different lives. And as you can see from the cover of *CQ*, and as you know from my experiences with Dorothy, Jerry and I were both extremely lucky to emerge from that horrid process with wonderful new women, both happier than we had imagined possible in the dark days of the divorces. You can read about Val (NV9L) and Jerry's journey in radio and in love in September *CQ*.

It was my honor to be introduced by Jerry to the 2200+ viewers who watched the CQ Contest Hall of Fame online award ceremony in May 2020. Go to the 9 hour and 18 minute point at the link below if you missed this.

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

Most of you know Jerry as an avid DXpeditioner with an unbelievable resume of trips to places frozen solid, burning hot, and always far from everywhere. Many active DXers regard him as the best SSB pileup operator in the world, but I have many times seen him also very successfully commanding the masses on CW. In recognition of these accomplishments, he was a 2017 inductee to the CQ DX Hall of Fame.

When Jerry's globetrotting slows down I'm confident that we will be welcoming him and Val at Signal Point, and you'll all have an opportunity to get to know this great couple.

Member Spotlight: Gary Hembree, N7IR

Still need w8wts n7ir n1zz na2u n4qq k8iv n8nr
df9lj k0md

