



# Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium  
Editor: W0CG

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## Idaho Last-Minute SITREP

*I am offline, so this newsletter is a bit tardy. Wednesday morning the 13<sup>th</sup> we had a wind event here. This was extremely unusual for North Idaho, where the weather is usually benign and very gentle. For a couple of hours the gusts topped 70 MPH, and that brought down dozens of 100+ foot trees in the several blocks of neighborhood immediately north and west of our condo. There were cars and houses destroyed, streets blocked, and lots of power poles and lines pulled down. I was a very busy boy taking care of urgent situations here at our condo community.*



*The power came up in our building after only a 27 hour outage and one cold and dark night, but data and phone connectivity could take much longer. There are power distribution transformers lying in front yards, HV lines in the streets, and the data distribution infrastructure was ripped to shreds. Many of my neighbors will be without power for days to come. I'm sending this from a public hotspot in town. Even our cell provider is down – no data is flowing.*

## Curacao Is Open!

Curacao has opened back up dramatically. In an unexpected, and possibly irrational move, an unlimited number of visitors are now permitted from everywhere. Airlines are resuming all of their normal flight schedules to Curacao. The government's stated justification for this is that the number of COVID-19 infections has "remained very limited," and they feel that the spread of the virus is under control with about a 2% positivity rate. Whether this is true, or whether it's in response to economic pressures, THE DOOR IS OPEN WIDE. This means that any CCCers who are willing to travel can now go to the QTH.



To enter Curacao they are requiring:

1. Completion of the digital immigration card before departing. See <http://dicardcuracao.com>.

2. Within 48 hours before departure, fill out the passenger locator card (PLC) and carry a printout of it with you at all times. It's available at the above link.
3. Provide proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test no older than 72 hours. This must be uploaded to the above URL prior to departure.

The web dialog at dicardcuracao.com is logical and well-designed and will walk you through the procedures.

American Airlines is making it increasingly easy to get the PCR test and then document it to authorities. They are recommending an at home test from LetsGetChecked (48 hour turnaround), or in person testing at DFW if you will be passing through there, administered by CareNow. See the link below.

<https://www.aa.com/i18n/travel-info/covid-19-testing.jsp?anchorLocation=DirectURL&title=covid19testing>

The AA site discusses an application for iOS or Android called VeriFLY. Although Curacao is not yet one of the destinations accepting VeriFLY, several other Caribbean nations have, and we can hope that Curacao will follow. This will make it even easier to prove that you have the required negative test and can document it prior to your departure.



You can read more about Curacao's loosened policy at this link.

<https://curacao.nu/curacao-versoepelt-reisbeperkingen/>

The next link below takes you to the U.S. Consulate General, where you can then hit the "Curacao" dropdown and read more about this new policy. Renting cars is no problem. And there are no restrictions on traveling from Curacao back to the U.S. except a negative test result.

<https://cw.usconsulate.gov/news-events/covid-19-information/>

There is no longer a quarantine requirement, but they are still doing the 9PM curfew, working the "2 meter band" of social separation, wash hands frequently, report any onset of symptoms, and generally be smart. See more at the link below.

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

Finally, here is a handy one-page summary of the new look of travel to the island.

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

I looked further and found ZERO RESTRICTIONS on

- Running high speed CW pileups,
- Making lots of contacts on reawakening 10 meters,
- Sitting up all night and working tons of Europeans on 40 SSB, or
- Grabbing rare ones at greyline time on 160.

This is exciting; we are soon to be getting back in business at some level.

### But Is It Smart?

It's now up to each of us to decide whether or not to travel.



Personally, I am extremely reluctant to venture out into the travel system until I have had at least one of the shots. As I write this it appears that the government has made a pig's breakfast of the immunization plan. It's chaos in most states because the delivery of shots to arms is underfunded, underorganized, and undermanned. The original targets are looking to be unrealistic. I am hoping to get into Phase 1b in Ohio as a teacher, but the parameters of that program are still very vague. Idaho is doing a reasonable job, and I have registered for the vaccine with my local Idaho Safeway grocery store pharmacy, but who knows?? Maybe I should try to get hired as a grocery bagger to get priority. I'm also registered in over 40 counties in

Florida, where there is no residence requirement and the age cutoff is 65. Here in Idaho it is still 75. As soon as I'm immunized I'll be on an airplane headed south.

But as they say on TV your experience may vary. Some of our CCCers have medical conditions or are on drug regimens that argue strongly against traveling yet. At the other extreme, there are some who have expressed a willingness to take the travel risk. So it will be up to you to make the judgement whether you want to risk traveling to the island and, in the worst case of bad luck, ending up in the hospital there. That all said, it does make sense to do some strawman planning for contesting, below.

### Call for Interest: ARRL DX CW 2021

The code contest is February 20-21, and I have paid the deposit for the Moran pool house for eight nights.



We will be able to put something on the air for this if:

- I am able to get there ahead of time to un-mothball the station OR
- There is someone on the team who feels qualified to set up the stations and logs in case I am not yet immunized and able to travel AND
- You understand that after a year of zero maintenance it may not be possible to have all Signal Point antennas functional AND
- We have at least a couple of willing operators to do a M/S, M/2, or M/M operation.

That's a lot of conditions, but who knows, this might indeed be possible. Please let me know if you are interested in undertaking a trip. I'll build a pre-planning page on the web and we'll see what might happen...!

### The Battle of the Bank, Part III

You read here before of the extreme difficulties that are being imposed on Jeff (K8ND) by Maduro and

Curiel's Bank. Jeff is a legal resident of Curacao, but even so they are giving him the razzle dazzle. His online access to his island bank account was suspended without warning because of inactivity, and now he's working to get it restored. This is very important because the bank's web site makes it possible to electronically pay obligations such as PJ2ND license renewals. I do many payment transactions each month using MCB online, and would be lost without it.



The bank asked Jeff to provide a ridiculous amount of certified documentation in order to restore access that he has already had for a long time. Here's what they asked him to do.

*Zuljendra (Maduro & Curiel's Bank)  
Dec 21, 2020, 9:02 AST*

*Dear Mr. Maass,*

*Thank you for using our services. Please accept our sincere apologies for the late reply.*

*We would like to inform you that your account is secure.*

*The issue you are experiencing is because the account has become inactive due to inactivity.*

*In order to restore the account, we will have to request an appointment in order for you to visit one of our branches. Please kindly advise which branch you would like to visit. You can choose from the branches below:*

*Colon branch*

*Sta. Maria*

*Rooi oi Catootje*

*Saliña*

*Rio Canario*

*In In case you are not on the island, you will need to provide a registered letter through FEDEX or DHL with the following information to the address below:*

*Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V.*

*Lionel Capriles Banking Center*

Rooi Catootje, Schottegatweg East z / n  
Willemstad, Curaçao  
Attn. Lucette Paulina

Please find the documents you are required to provide in the registered letter below:

- Legalized letter requesting to activate the account that has become inactive
- Legalized copy of a valid passport
- Legalized proof of address (not older than 3 months)

The documents should be legalized by either a notary, the department of public affairs or your current municipality.

Hope to have informed you accordingly.

A paragon of patience, Jeff did all that was requested and sent off a packet of papers at a cost of \$56. Now he waits. We'll continue to give you the play by play in this most interesting game.

### **W8WTS' December Treasury Balance**

The end of December and end of 2020 balance is \$4375.82. This is the Station Support fund, separate from the rapidly declining real estate fund. For years I have been building real estate reserves against a rainy day, but I never expected a rainy year+.

We said in the May CCC membership invitation letters that we would refund the \$60 station support portion of the reduced dues we collected if we ended up being shut out of the island for the first half of 2021. It's now apparent that the island is open, so unless there are objections we will retain your \$60 contributions on account. Then in May 2021 we will have another CCC membership and dues cycle, and we're hoping at that time to re-fund the station and real estate for what should be a pretty nearly normal June '21 – May '22 contest season at PJ2T.



Dorothy and I are chomping at the bit to get back there, get dirty and sweaty, and work hard to make the QTH again able to support you as you arrive for contesting. (We will see a lot more of Dorothy now that she's free of her work obligations in Idaho.)

### **Speaking of ARRL DX CW Contests...**

As we look forward to a possible ARRL DX CW operation in 2021, it is fun to look back pictorially at that same contest, this one from February 2003, remembering our friends and our fun.



Above: Tom, W8TK pounding away in the contest at Station #1. Note the old tables, manual antenna switching system, and FT-1000 transceiver. There's no triplexer or antenna switching panel on the right-side wall – only a contesting map of Europe. At the time, this was our only AL-1200 amplifier.



Above, a crude precursor to today's Station 4. A TS-930 (from W9VA), vintage Alpha 600 watt amplifier (from WI9WI), and a 45 pound CRT monitor.



Station 2, circa 2003, with the Titan II amp (now dead), an FT-1000 Field (now dead), Windows 97 (now dead), a big CRT (now dead), an inkjet printer (now dead), manual antenna switches (now really dead), and YES! the LK-800 amplifier, still very much alive and serving us on 40 meters year after year.



The ARRL DX CW 2003 team photo. Jim (KP2L/W0NB), Keith (WA9S, SK), Geoff, Tom (W8TK) and Noel (W9EFL SK). Sunset Waters Beach Resort was in full operation at this time, and they had actual white sand, real trees, beach furniture, sun shades, and pretty girls in (or out of) bikinis. It's a wonder we got any work done at the station. Not everything about the passage of time is good.



Before we built the Ocean Pavilion, breakfast was often out in the dirt in the front yard. Tuesday, February 18, 2003, here are Jim (KP2L), Keith (WA9S SK) with his back to us, and Noel (W9EFL SK) at the right, chowing down not long after sunrise. My ex-wife, Cindy Smith, is hidden behind Jim at the left.

As you see, we have made many wonderful memories at PJ2T and fully expect to continue doing so well into the future. Staying active and on the air is the finest thing we can do to honor those who went before.

### Work Plans: 2021

Here are some of the projects that got frozen in time in February 2020. We'll thaw them out in 2021 and get back to work.

- Reinstall tile in East Bedroom shower. We took it off last year before it fell off on its own. The West Bedroom is finished and now we need to do the same in the other bedroom.



- Install working control diodes and lights for antenna switching. Not all of the lights work, and we need to do some clever redesign to get it all working.
- Isolate the problem and parts needs for the Titan III. When this amp works, it works GREAT! We need to diagnose this and get parts on order.
- Build a sarcophagus around the base of the WARC tower. The tiltover base of this tower is near failure. We need to build forms up around the present base and fill it with enough concrete so the only thing coming out the top is aluminum tower legs. This will take strong backs and a lot of materiel.
- Splint the north US/JA tower leg just above the 80 vee beam.



- Extensive repair of 160 radials.
- Cut out tree branches that are in contact with the Europe tower southeast guy set.
- Install new equalizer plate on US/JA tower at ocean guy.

- Install control cable extensions so that the 15 Meter System box reaches Stations 4, 5, and 6.
- Ongoing corrosion control on US/JA tower.
- Assess corrosion on Europe tower in year 3 of its service life.
- Repair poorly installed grout in main room floor.
- Reinstall top yagi on the US 5 over 5 stack. I rebuilt it extensively in 2020, and it waits on the roof terrace.
- Install safety grip bar in West Bathroom. KB7Q has one he said he would donate.
- Install three more Ring surveillance cameras, one looking down on the front yard picture window area, one at the East Sunroom looking southwest, and one up on the WARC tower looking down on the entire area.
- Restore all damage and deterioration from a year of neglect. The details are indeterminate, but this will be a big deal.
- Install new monitor (already purchased) to replace my personal failed monitor in the East Sunroom.
- Look for contractors and pre-hung sliding glass doors to begin replacing all four doors.
- Tear out kitchen backsplash and counter tile and replace with new attractive and serviceable tile.

### Reminders of Curacao in Idaho

I'm missing Curacao terribly, and local reminders of the island and of ham radio sometimes make it worse, sometimes better. The photo on the next page is from the next town to our west, Post Falls, Idaho. We stumbled on this road sign, and I just *had* to stop for a photo. We wandered up Signal Point Road, and it dead-ended at the top of a mountain – definitely the right place for me to have built a home!



Not Signal Point, Curacao, but at least it's the right name!

Idaho wildlife license plates have a format that's familiar to amateur radio operators. I was astonished last month to come upon this one on a vehicle parked in downtown Coeur d'Alene!



**Just a Reminder**

This final photo will remind us of why we all want to get back to Curacao. It's not just about the radio. It's snowing like mad as I write this in Idaho!!



I doubt if this guy knows that he is Curacao DX!

Below are two more unwitting Idaho drivers who have little idea that they probably have licensed namesakes in the U.K. and France.



Photo thanks K8ND

**Member Spotlight: Nil**

Sorry, I couldn't find a volunteer for this January newsletter. Can you write yourself up for February? We all love reading your stories.

73

