



# Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium  
Editor: W0CG

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## PJ2T Wins CQWW SSB!

We returned to CQWW in a big way after the one year pandemic layoff. We posted the highest claimed score in the world in any category, making more QSOs from our Signal Point shack than anyone else in the world. Here are the numbers.

160	203	13	31
80	1103	21	89
40	3167	33	122
20	2945	33	122
15	4325	36	121
10	3264	29	96

15007 165 581 Total: 32,430,858

Our usual CCC team members were unable to make the trek this year, but we were fortunate to be able to get expert help from within the contest community. This magnificent score was achieved by a full multi/multi team. All beds in both houses were filled, including CCC members Ray (ND8L), Pete (K8PGJ), Brooke (N2BA), and guests Jon (KL2A), Rich (NN3W), Martin (G4XUM), Roger (G4BVY), Rich (M5RIC), and Rob (VE4GV). Unfortunately, VE4GV missed the trip at literally the last minute. He arrived at the Toronto airport very early for his flight, but Air Canada was unable to process their own Business Class check-in line fast enough, and Rob and others were left behind when their nonstop flight pushed back for Curacao. I happened to be at the airport that afternoon and caught a photo of that flight arriving, sadly without Rob on board.



The 737-MAX arriving from Toronto without VE4GV

Rob quickly re-calibrated his plan and flew back west to Edmonton, joining his VE6 friends there for the worldwide. In an act of massive gentlemanly courtesy he covered every cent of his shared costs for the SSB contest at PJ2T, knowing that all the expenses had already been incurred even though he was not here. Rob is on the WW CW team, and we look forward to that weekend.

We all found the COVID procedures to be straightforward, and processing in at the Curacao airport was very fast, easy, and professional. There was no baggage inspection, and all of the logistics proceeded easily. The third day rapid antigen tests were quick, easy, and cheap (\$20) at the Curacao airport, and everyone tested negative on all tests incoming, 3<sup>rd</sup> day, and returning to the States.

We were particularly fortunate that three of the world's best-known testers joined us from the U.K. late in the team-building process. The photo (next page) shows Martin (G4XUM), Roger (G4BVY) and Rich (M5RIC). Martin is the EU-2 team leader for WRTC 2022/23, and all three are crack operators who arrived quietly, needed zero ramp up training time, and did a magnificent job on the radios. NN3W's analysis showed that Martin was the team's rate king this weekend with an hour in the mid-300s on 15 meters.



Martin (G4XUM), Roger (G3NVY), Rich (M5RIC)

The team spent Tuesday – Thursday as usual, getting familiar with the equipment and antennas and doing a lot of non-contest operating on all bands. Pre-contest conditions were very good, with excellent runs into Europe on 10. By the time everyone arrived I had managed to fix almost all of the problems except for a jammed 40 meter rotor. Wednesday morning K8PGJ, G4BVY, and NN3W stood by assisting on the ground while I swapped in a new rotor. Thanks to Gary (N7IR) for the donation of that rotor, which arrived here by ocean freight, went into storage last week, and was almost immediately pulled from storage and installed on the Europe tower the week following.

N2BA's arrival on Wednesday was rocky because soon after his arrival at the rental house in a driving rainstorm he sliced a very deep cut in the forefinger of his left hand, almost completely severing the pad of that finger. I called the clinic in Barber, and they said we could come in. Luckily, there was no waiting and the doctor saw Brooke right away. Dr. Sommer spent about 45 minutes working on the injury, and sent Brooke home with a big bandage, his arm in a sling, and a prescription for an antibiotic. His follow-up visit was Friday morning, and things are healing on schedule, but Brooke operated the contest with only one hand. Total tab for that medical treatment visit: \$85. Welcome to Curacao.

On Thursday G4BVY accompanied me to the Europe Beverage termination, and we replaced a vaporized termination resistor (photo) that was destroyed by a lightning surge. This charred body used to be a 470 ohm 5 watt carbon resistor.



Europe Beverage termination blown to bits

Below is Roger, G4BVY, who was kind enough to join me to replace the resistor. He climbs like a goat and was not the least bit winded.



Roger Dixon, G4BVY at the Europe Beverage termination.

After a couple weeks of high intensity station setup and repairs (stories follow) the contest started smoothly. Here's the kickoff (next page) Friday evening.



First minute: K8PGJ (10), G4XUM (15), NN3W (40), KL2A (80), G4BVY (20) with N2BA at the kitchen table.

These guys put 15 contacts in the log (below) in the first minute, with 69 after five minutes.

QSO: 7183 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	KC1XX	59	05
QSO: 7183 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	K3LR	59	05
QSO: 21319 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	VK4SDD	59	30
QSO: 28447 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	PY2CP	59	11
QSO: 14284 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	KX2L	59	05
QSO: 21319 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	JE1CKA	59	25
QSO: 28447 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	PY1NS	59	11
QSO: 21319 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	N6AA	59	03
QSO: 14284 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	N8NN	59	05
QSO: 21319 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	PY3ZZ	59	11
QSO: 3752 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	VP2EIH	59	08
QSO: 21319 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	PY3EW	59	11
QSO: 14284 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	KU2C	59	05
QSO: 28447 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	PY5HR	59	11
QSO: 14284 PH 2021-10-30 0000 PJ2T	59	9	W6YI	59	03

10 meters is finally back. Pete at the 160/10 station opted wisely to start on 10 and worked a good collection of South America and the Pacific before switching to the challenges of 160. Conditions the first night were noisy and slow, but the crew slogged it out, ending up with 2972 contacts by 1200Z Saturday morning. Here's M5RIC on the 40 graveyard shift at 2:30 AM Saturday morning.



M5RIC, 40 meters, 2:30 AM Saturday

The first Europe contact (E7DX) was at 0950Z, a testament to the ability of the Ridge tribander to open bands early. TM6M got in the log on 15 at 1041Z (6:41 AM local), and 15 was off to the races. To our

vast surprise 10 opened hard to Europe starting at 1141Z with MD4K, and the big run was on. Saturday morning rates were incredible, with all three bands on the triplexer working almost 100% Europe for hours, with 20 doing especially well at 14.136 in the non-US band. A few stateside stations began showing up around 1250Z, but we kept the focus on Europe to harvest those multipliers.

By the midpoint at 0000Z Saturday night we had 9004 contacts in the log and calculated that we would end up between 13,500 and 14,000 contacts. As you see, that was low, concluding with 15,007. The Coronal Mass Ejection event never hurt us perceptibly, and conditions remained good to the end. There were zero equipment or software glitches the entire 48 hours and we experienced virtually no interstation interference. The stations performed cleanly all weekend. We worried all day Saturday about a huge block of bad weather that looked fearful on radar and blackened the eastern sky. Miraculously, it never reached our end of the island, and Sunday was much prettier (and safer). A weekend photo gallery follows.



CCC member Ray, ND8L on 80 meters Saturday night



Drugs were taken during Sunday operator breaks.



G4BVY briefing K8PGJ as Pete begins a shift on 80.



G4XUM appearing relaxed as he runs incredible 300+ rates on 10



N2BA locked and loaded and ready to plug in fast for a 20 meter shift.



KL2A at the 80 meter position



Sunday immediately after the contest, K8PGJ and ND8L doing hot dogs and bacon cheeseburgers



The team that won CQWW SSB: G4XUM, G4BVY, K8PGJ, W0CG, N2BA, ND8L, NN3W, M5RIC, KL2A.

We signaled (pun intentional) loud and clear to the contesting world that PJ2T is back!

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**President's Notes**  
**Jeff Maass K8ND / PJ2ND**

**PJ2T Contest Season Has Arrived!**

It has been good hearing PJ2T on the air running stations!

First, Uli DL8OBQ operated in the Worked All Germany (WAG) contest October 16-17. The rules of this contest allows a station outside of Germany to

work only stations in Germany, and Uli placed #5 in Single-Operator SSB High Power, and the first place non-German station in that category! Then the nine members of the Multi-Multi PJ2T CQWW SSB team blew away the competition with a claimed score of 32.4 Million points with just over 15,000 QSOs claimed! 10-meters was OUTSTANDING, with 3264 claimed QSOs in 29 zones and 96 countries! Another #1 World!

After some earlier concern about drop-outs in the CQWW CW Team due to continuing concerns about travel during COVID, Geoff reports that the CW team is now fully filled with nine team members committed, and they are ready to run later this month!

The incredible 10 meter numbers in the CQWW SSB Contest suggests that the ARRL 10 meter contest in December should be a blast! At present, N7NR is considering running the contest as one of several M/S operators via the remote, but right now our confidence in the DSL speed is low, making the remote “iffy”. It would be great to have a team of CCCers (or a single op) on site. Geoff and Dorothy will be there to support you: contact Geoff if you’d like to put PJ2T on the air for the ARRL 10-Meter Contest!

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### Updated: COVID-19 Status on Curacao

As this is written (11/11/2021), the number of active COVID cases on the island of Curacao is only 90, and has been fluctuating below 100 cases for a couple of weeks. Only 9 people are hospitalized, with a total of 175 COVID deaths since the beginning of the pandemic. By comparison, Ohio reports over 26,000 active cases this week, and has had over 25,000 deaths! Testing requirements for travel have become easier, and should not cause anyone to hesitate to travel to the island!

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### PJ2T Facebook Page

One of the things that I’ve been doing for several years is editing the PJ2T page on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pj2tcuracao>). Posted are news of activities at the station and some updates of the state of Curacao (COVID, travel restrictions, tourist articles and features to see on the island, etc.). During a normal week, a post is viewed by ~300 people! During the CQWW SSB Contest period, the number went as high as 2700 people (the post ‘Some ‘action photos’ of the PJ2T team in the first 24 hours of the CQWW SSB Contest!’ with six photos)! The most popular postings are those that contain parts of the

email updates that Geoff W0CG sends to the CCC mailing list, and sent by others during their stays at the station. Some of these are gleaned from other Curacao information sources. If you are on Facebook, stop by and ‘Like’ the page and see all the online news of Signal Point PJ2T!

### NEWS FLASH: K3 Donated to CCC

Just prior to press time we received the superb news that CCC member Dave Heumann, N7NR, has pledged up to \$2000 to fund purchase of our sixth K3. N7NR was already in the process of shopping for a transceiver when Dave phoned him to say that he would pick up this tab. With the sunspots waking up we will need to run five or even six stations to be competitive, and we presently own five K3s. (We ran five stations the week before last in the SSB contest.) This leaves no overhead in case of failure of a transceiver, so the comfortable number of K3s to have on site is seven. K8PGJ brought his personal radio for WW SSB, and we can continue doing that, but eventually we would love to have seven on site. THANKS, DAVE, FOR NUMBER 6!



### Catastrophic Failure of Hardline to the Ridge

On November 4 while testing the HF-2500 at 2000 watts on the 80 meter Ridge dipole the W9NJY remote coax switch 3 amp fuse blew, and all antennas went dead. Replacement of the fuse resulted in the next fuse blowing in switch positions 2, 3, 4 when DC was sent up the line. The transmission line as viewed from the shack showed a 6 ohm DC short. Like a big windstorm that finds the weak trees, 2000 watts will find the weak points in an antenna system.

I brought the box back down from the Ridge on November 5, but was very surprised to find no failed components inside. Without the Ridge box on the hilltop the line still showed 6 ohms center to ground. Thus the troubleshooting approach here is to divide and conquer, particularly because I forgot that the AA-54 antenna analyzer could be made to act as a TDR.

There are four splice points in the line from the Ridge to the shack, and I opened the easiest splice first, across the road near the neighborhood gate (photo).



Ridge hardline opened across the road

This took a lot of digging and removal of gobs of weatherproofing. Tests at the point in the photo showed the line good up to the Ridge, so the 6 ohm fault had to be in the backyard.

I dug out the photos from September 9, 2008, when W8AV, WA9S (SK) and I put in this line. That told me where to dig. This is along the inside of the perimeter wall, one pilaster north of the US tower guy and a few more inches north. The Type N barrel at that joint had blown black, its center receiver tabs were bent out of place, and the hardline connector was hanging loose and fell off in my hand! Problem located. Sure enough that Type N barrel tested 6 ohms DC resistance (below on left).



The failed Type N barrel on the left took out the entire Ridge system. It was burned black inside

Luckily we had spares, and I put in a new Type N barrel, a new double male N adapter, and totally reconstructed the hardline connector mess.

The hardline center pin had not been soldered at the time of installation, and the braid sheath was installed backwards. Here's the line as I was reinstalling that connector.



This is the only coax in the run to the Ridge that is not 7/8 inch Helix. We had a length of about 225 feet of this on hand and, using UG-167/U connectors supplied by N4RV, installed it in the ground. The house is to the left in the photo and the Ridge to the right. You see the connector body prepositioned on the cable.



The killer iron I got for \$8 bucks in a garage sale in Spokane a few years back. This will solder Bolivia to Peru.

I got out our Big Bertha (photo above), drilled flow holes in the sleeve, soldered on the center pin (below), reinstalled the connector body correctly, and tightened it down with two serious big crescent wrenches.



Center pin soldered correctly 13 years after installation

The electrical and physical integrity of this connector are now solid, and it will not come off in the next person's hand. After reassembly everything tested open circuit, as desired. I went back up the Ridge on November 6 and reinstalled the switch box, and now the entire system works perfectly. Also, the high SWRs (2:1 and creeping up) that we have been seeing on the Ridge antennas are now gone, and the entire system is much more reliable.

This was a reverse Murphy event in that we were very lucky to find the fault and fix this critical part of PJ2T outside of a contest.

### Curacao Ocean Cargo Shipment at Signal Point

The photo shows the 10 boxes that comprise the ocean shipment at Caribbean Cargo Services on October 19. The fork lift guys and truck drivers in the yard took one look at this pile, another at my car, and then had a good laugh and a sneer. I fixed them. With some patient management of shapes I got everything in the car intact, and drove off to looks of amazement.



Our freight at Caribbean Cargo Services, October 19

About 90 minutes later it was all unloaded on the West porch (below). Since then everything has been

carefully unpacked, stowed in the house, and accounted for the item location inventory. With any luck we won't need another ocean shipment in 2022 unless someone donates a rack of 4-1000A amplifiers.



A happy W0CG with the ocean freight finally on site.

### Mother Nature Vandalizes the US/JA Ridge Beverage



The lightning-blasted US/JA Beverage feedpoint

The photo shows what used to be the Ridge US/JA Beverage antenna feedpoint, with a Beverage transformer and an N7IR homebrew common mode choke. On quick inspection it appeared that a vandal had kicked in the boxes or whacked them with a hammer. Looking more carefully the next day, it was the obvious work of a lightning strike. I found the burned toroids from the choke on the ground in the weeds about five feet away. No part of the transformer was ever found – it apparently disintegrated.

Here (next page) are the burned toroids that I recovered from the weeds.



The next photo shows the parts I was able to recover from the Ridge.



The Carlon plastic box and what's left of the feedpoint components.

Applying a little forensic analysis to these burned out parts, it is clear what happened. There was a lightning event somewhere on the Ridge behind the house. The neighbors said it was the loudest noise they had ever heard. We did not take a direct strike, but the lightning induced a monster voltage surge in the 880 foot Beverage wire. Luckily, the tiny gauge wires in the toroids acted as fuses and prevented the surge from making its way down the feedline to the shack. I cut back the blackened RG-6 about four inches from the burned connector, and it was pristine. The surge entered through the transformer, so it took the worst of it and was vaporized. And the 14 gauge Beverage wire itself opened about three feet short of the transformer, further limiting the damage in the direction of the shack.

Luckily, there was a spare transformer on site, and the common choke box for the 4SQ was not installed, so I took them to the Ridge, put on all new connectors, assembled everything, and managed to get the antenna working again. The result is pictured in the next column.



Successful repairs at the US/JA Ridge Beverage feedpoint

This antenna is performing well, and it is unlikely we will reinstall the old US Beverage along the oceanfront because the vegetation has grown back very thick, and we know that the bulldozers will be back anyway.

### Additional Signal Point Maintenance this Month

We never stop working, but here are some of the high spots of this month's projects.

The bamboo blinds in the East Sunroom were totally falling apart after 15 years in the heat and the UV. We ordered replacements to our custom dimensions from a Phoenix online source in July. Those arrived at the Ohio place, I shipped that box from there to the island, and finally we put them in on November 6. That was a huge mess of dust from drilling anchors into the masonry window frames and moving around the furniture (below). The job is now complete and we happily threw the wrecked old ones into the garbage can.



Geoff drilling holes for the new custom made blinds.

One of our members mentioned that it would be helpful to have a safety bar in the West Bathroom. KB7Q piped up that he had this to donate. Dorothy and I picked it up in Bozeman in August, shipped it on the ocean freight, and here (next page) is the result. Thanks KB7Q.



The safety bar donated by KB7Q in the West Bathroom

Note also in the above photo another improvement, a new stainless steel kickplate. That door has been delaminating at the bottom for years. Dorothy has fixed it with wood filler again and again, but that was not a lasting fix. So we ordered this high quality stainless steel 6 mil kickplate and sent it down with the ocean freight. This looks MUCH better and will last.

We had the same problem and applied the same fix to the outside of the door on the Step Closet (below).



New stainless steel kickplate on Step Closet.

These darned things are expensive, about \$75 each, but they will be good long term solutions to areas that looked really ratty around the QTH.

### **PJ2T Remote Operation**

Because a commercial vendor has taken over the Curacao PTT, DSL is now very slow. At present, it's not even certain that the present circuit can support remote operation, but we're giving it a try. In addition, we have a new cablehead modem and needed to establish the wireless connection between it and the RRC box.

On November 12 I connected the RRC box to the new Huawei modem via an Ethernet cable, powered things up, and sent the logon data to KB7Q. Gene worked in Bozeman for many hours that day via the Anydesk tool and managed to get this strange new modem to behave better, changing the range of local LAN addresses, setting up new WiFi access, and struggling successfully to figure out the port forwarding scheme in the Huawei. As I write this he can now connect to the RRC remote box from outside. CW has been transmitted remotely and copied on the Reverse Beacon Network, and PJ2/KB7Q just made a few preliminary contacts on 20 CW via the remote on the afternoon of November 13. Work continues. The Internet is still very slow, however.

### **K8ND / PJ2ND Curacao Travel Plans**

Our president arrives on December 17, will run the Stew Perry event, departing on January 6. Jeff (and hopefully W8WTS) will be here in Late January for the CQWW 160 CW contest. We miss SM4KYN and Ingela, who were not able to make their usual Christmas trip to Curacao because of COVID restrictions imposed by the Swedish government.

### **Commander HF-2500 Report**

The original impetus for the ocean shipment was to get the HF-2500 amplifier here. Like a trip to the grocery store for a box of cereal, that two box shipment grew to 10 boxes.

After collecting the amp from NR0X in Iowa and continuing to my home in Ohio I took out the transformer and tubes, shipped everything separately, VERY well-packed, then put it back together in Curacao. The mounting bolts for the transformer are not captive in the case, so I made a beer trestle (below) to be able to tighten them from below.



Beer is good for more than one thing.

The HF-2500 is a beautiful work of construction and design art, next page.



The amp reassembled

Next big moment was a smoke test, and the HV and fan came up fine (below).



The first application of power to the amp in Curacao, thankfully, no drama.

Finally, on the evening of November 4 when all the contesters were gone and we had some quiet time, I hooked up the amp at Station 1 to see if it would make RF. The result was a great success, below.



I started out on 40, carefully tuning. Working up slowly, the amp made 2000 watts of output effortlessly. I could probably have gone farther, but that was the top of the scale on the Autek wattmeter. First QSO with the HF-2500 from Curacao was NO8C on 40 CW.

But a big caution: This thing is *dangerous*. As you saw elsewhere in this newsletter, it makes such a vast amount of power that it finds the weak spots in our system, blowing out a weak Type N barrel connector in the feedline to the Ridge. We need to avoid any more than 1500 watts out, ever, particularly on our antennas with traps. Also, the tuning is very critical. The grid current limit is 60 ma, and it is very easy to exceed that. I'm working on a tuning guide for the amp, and we will not allow visitors such as the youth group to use it. It's a powerful tool, but requires much, much more caution than the AL-1200s. THANK YOU again Jason for this incredible gift.

### Curacao COVID Travel Requirements as of Mid-November

See <https://gobiernu.cw/corona-travel-to-curacao/> .

Traveling here just got simpler because now you only need a negative rapid antigen test within 24 hours of your flight to Curacao. This is the cheap and fast test. If you transit MIA, you can get a quick test at the airport. See <https://news.miami-airport.com/covid-19-testing-available-daily-at-mia-starting-may-21/>

On your third day on Curacao it's necessary to get another rapid antigen test. These are very quick and the charge is only \$20. Results are provided normally within 20 minutes via E-mail. Travelers who can prove they are vaccinated do not need this third day test, but they do NOT accept U.S. vaccination cards because they are too easy to spoof. ADC offers tests at the Hato airport and at many other locations on the island. They are very professional.



Analytisch Diagnostisch Centrum

To return to the U.S. you must have a negative rapid antigen result within three days before your flight to the States.

### Worked All Germany Report

CCC member Uli Thielke, DL8OBQ, arrived October 14 and ran the Worked All Germany contest that weekend.



Uli, DL8OBQ just prior to WAG.

He was in the Single Op SSB High Power category, and posted the high claimed score for a station not in Germany, operating only half of the 24 hour contest period. Here's the detail.

Band	CW Qs	SSB Qs	Multi s	Total Score
80:		14	9	
40:		83	23	
20:		142	24	
15:		295	26	
10:		89	22	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>174,096</b>

That was World #5, and top non-DL. Congrats Uli, and it was GREAT seeing PJ2T on the bands for the first time in many, many months.

### Congrats KY7M and NA2U

Three cheers for CCCers KY7M and NA2U who remotely operated NA7TB to a second high claimed score (as of November 8) in CW SS Multi-Op HP.  $1273 \times 84 = 213,862$ . W8WTS also looked good in Single Op LP and former member W8TK is presently second in Multi-Op LP, and our member N7IR is listed third in Single Op QRP with an astonishing 623 QSOs, and WI9WI in the same category with 450. It sure was frustrating to sit down here and only be able to listen....

### About CQWW CW 2021

We have a full team! After my total panic when all but one of our CCC team cancelled I'm happy to report that we have been able to build a team of eight top operators, anchored by CCC veteran WI9WI. The team is W0CG, WI9WI+KA9DOC, NG7M, K1EP, AC6ZM+XYL, N6AA, KO8SCA, YO8WW, and VE4GV. I'm busily getting the station ready for the event, and making repairs and improvements. The

station performed flawlessly all 48 hours of the SSB contest, so my job is not terribly daunting.

We will miss our CCC friends, but are fortunate to be making new friends and will do our best to post a score you will be proud of.

### Upcoming Events

**ARRL 10 Meter Contest (December):** CCC member N7NR is planning to operate this one via the remote as one of several M/S ops. All depends on the speed of the DSL link, which has been poor of late. There is still opportunity for you to physically fly south and take part!

**CQ 160 CW (2022):** K8ND, possibly W8WTS, possibly K1LT.

**ARRL DX CW:** Hopefully COVID will be much less a problem by then. There are lots of spaces available. Drop me an E-mail to sign up. Dorothy and I will be staying on the island through early April, and we hope to see a lot of our friends there.

**ARRL DX SSB:** N1ZZ and his PCARS (Melbourne, FL) group will return again, including our recent new CCC members K5LD and K4JC. This contest is open to anyone else interested. K8PGJ will hopefully be on hand. Others?

**CQ WPX SSB:** The operator list for this contest is presently W4ATL, K4WK, AE4CW, WT4BT, WA4ZXV, K4UEE, and K4NHW. Bob (K4UEE) is still recruiting, and this contest is absolutely open to all CCC members who may want to fly south in late March. We have the Moran pool house reserved and Dorothy will still be on site in late March.

### New Sliding Glass Doors Are Installed

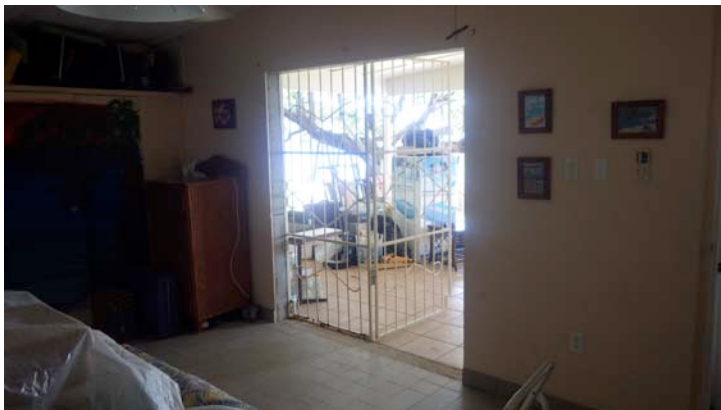
As you all know, the sliding glass doors, particularly in the East Bedroom and at the east end of the shack, have been pretty much inoperative ever since we have had this QTH. Besides that, they are UGLY, encrusted with rust and salt oxidation. The problem with fixing or replacing them was that they are a totally non-standard size in a masonry opening, and they can not be removed because of the security bars on the outside.

Dorothy dug in and did lots of research earlier this year and found that three island companies had almost simultaneously started offering sliders custom built to size! We did extensive shopping in March and decided on the Wiltraco company, as reported in an earlier newsletter issue.

In March we paid the 66% deposit and started the long wait. By mid-October the doors were ready, we paid the final amount, and scheduled the installation for Monday, October 18. The company does the install, but they require that the customer remove the doors before Wiltraco arrives to install the new ones. That meant that Dorothy and DL8OBQ and I had a fun-filled very eventful morning on the 18<sup>th</sup>, rushing to do the job before the 2 PM scheduled start of installation.



Above you see Uli and me wrestling with the frame of the old door in the East Bedroom. Removing the glass panels required that we destroy the old tracks with the angle grinder. It was a lot of heat, sparks, and pounding, but we successfully got the doors out with about 15 minutes to spare. Now. They had darned well better show up, because the house had two giant holes in it.



Here's (above) a view of no door, and no door frame, from inside the East Bedroom.

The crew showed up at 2:30, not bad by Curacao standards. True to Curacao form, they phoned when they were unable to find the QTH, so Dorothy and Uli went running in the car and found them parked and lost at the entrance to the old hotel.

Also true to form, the doors did not fit – a little too big, and this even though the owner of Wiltraco himself had come to measure in March, and gave us his spiel

about how proper measurements were the key to his retaining profitability. After much grinding, cutting, and hammering, and a long delay, they finally managed to install both doors and one screen. Here below is the East Bedroom door on the way across the front yard.



The new East Bedroom sliding glass door system

While these doors were going in I checked the truck (photo below), and it was apparent that they did not have the second screen.



Wiltraco's doormobile, missing our second screen.

At the end of the job the lead installer told me that the "office would call" about the missing screen. I gave the installers a liberal tip for their extra trouble in making things fit and sent them on their way.

The doors look and function superbly. For the first time ever we can exit the East Bedroom through the patio door. Dorothy worked like mad the next day or two with her cement filler and primer and paint and repaired all the damage they did installing these doors, and now all is perfect. These were expensive (\$4300) but well worth it, as they are a permanent solution and really improve both the functionality and aesthetics of the place.

Two weeks later they came out to put in the second screen. The first installer gave up, departed, and four hours later two different guys arrived. After an hour

they also gave up and said the screen was too big (7 mm) and would have to be remade. On November 13 two Wiltraco guys showed up unexpectedly with a remade screen and managed to get it to fit. But then the glass door would not latch. After another hour of modifications everything finally works!

### Two New Air Conditioners Installed October 22

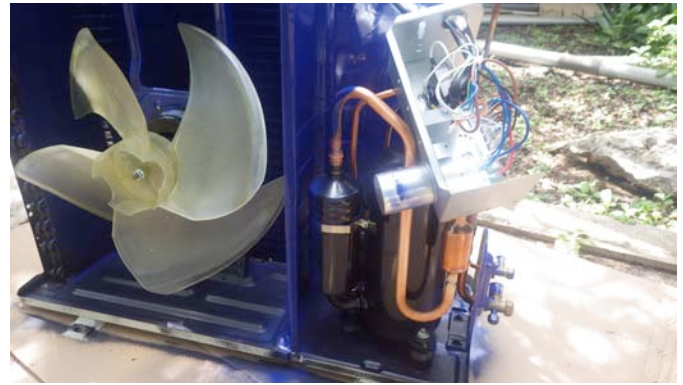
We arrived on October 13 and three days later both the East Sunroom and East Bedroom air conditioners had given up the ghost. Our neighbor recommended a new airco technician with whom he had had good success, we called him, and three days later he showed up with two new air conditioners. Both the old ones were 7+ years old, and it made no sense to try to repair them.

I intentionally bought non-inverter units because they are simpler and more robust, and do not make HF noise. I did remove the toroids from the old East Sunroom airco before the guys hauled off the corpse.

I was immediately impressed with this guy (John Biscayne) and his helper David because their first act was to disassemble the outside units and aggressively coat the inside with salt-protecting spray and an asphalt-like spray coating. This should be a huge help in adding longevity to these seaside salt-challenged units. Here are the outside units drying while the old air conditioners are removed.



The new 12,000 and 24,000 BTU compressor units drying on the sidewalk, fully coated inside.



Another view – the blue is the anti-salt marine spray paint.

Below is John installing the inside part of the 24,000 BTU unit, making it look easy, but this thing is very heavy.



Both units work beautifully, and we got a very good price because there is not a big demand for the non-inverters. Also, John bought them on his contractor account, gaining us a nice discount. The installation was around \$450 and we are extremely happy with the outcome. Also, it is very nice to have contact with a true professional for future air conditioning needs. I tipped them both very heavily, and they will remember us!

The day after I put a coat of epoxy primer on both of the outdoor units, and then on November 8 put in a miserable 3+ hour early morning session painting them with finish epoxy, bright white. We are hoping that these measures will get us 6+ years of service from these, and ND8L and M5RIC really enjoyed the cool comfort in the East Bedroom.

### Europe Beverage Repair

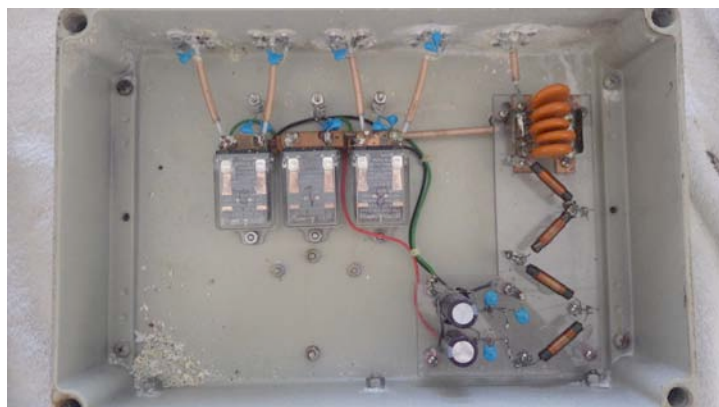
Rats. Replacing the blown out termination resistor did not cure all the ills of the Europe Beverage. Just prior to the WW SSB contest I cabled the feedpoint common mode choke out of the circuit and the antenna came back to life. I brought the choke box down to the shack and verified that it is inop. N7IR says that the fine wire

in the 2:1 transformers is probably blown. He is fabricating replacement transformers, and WI9WI will bring them to Curacao and one of the team for the CW contest will do the repair. That antenna served us very well in WW SSB, however, even without the choke. Thanks to N7IR who is presently fabricating more RX antenna parts for the station.

### W9NJY Box Repair

For eight years the W9NJY remote coax switch system has worked flawlessly. This 5KW remote switch was designed, built, and donated by Andy. His engineering was masterful, but even it could not endure the lightning surge that exploded various parts on the Ridge in September.

Starting on October 17 we were unable to use the Ridge antennas. I went up and listened to the box while Dorothy operated the switch in the shack. Darn, no relay clicking was heard. So I brought it down and started the diagnosis. Here's what that Ridge box looks like (below).



The Ridge portion of the W9NJY remote antenna switch

As you can see in the photo below there was some significant corrosion inside at the SO-239s. (All else looked pristine.)



This is where our 4500 watts of 14, 21, and 28 MHz RF enters the box, sometimes running all three bands at once. I cleaned all this up and did some testing and decided it would not be necessary to replace these connectors.

Three years ago I was thinking about our vulnerabilities and realized that loss of this box would completely wreck our ability to contest. So I ordered a complete set of spare parts from Jameco in anticipation of a failure such as this one. After some troubleshooting and testing it was apparent that the problem was one lowly blown diode. Here's the workbench at Station 2.



Operating theater for the switch box repair

This thing works by sending either +16 VDC, -16 VDC, or 16 VAC up the hardline. The circuit in the Ridge box isolates the transmit RF from these signal voltages, rectifies the AC, and keys the appropriate relays to select one of four output antenna ports. The blown diode did not like the lightning surge, failed in a short, and this blew the 3 amp fuse in the shack box. I had a new diode on hand (much beefier rating) and installed it with success. The photo shows how one tiny, innocent-looking component could wreck our entire contest effort.



After testing and validation, Uli came up to the Ridge with me, carrying the heavy box, we reinstalled the NJY tower box, and all was well. Huge relief, because CQWW SSB was just around the corner. THANKS to Uli for his patient help. He runs about five miles every morning at Signal Point, so climbing the Ridge is play to him.

This all happened before the failure of the Type-N connector in the Ridge line required a second trip of the box down and back up. We got our exercise in October and November!

### **New Lawn Mower**

After over 15 years of nursing our old lawn mower I threw in the towel. As you may remember from an earlier newsletter, lawnmowers were very hard to find on Curacao in March, and prices for a simple machine were around \$800. I mentioned in the newsletter that I was going to try shipping a new one down via ocean freight, and SM4KYN almost instantly sent me \$200 toward the new mower. For years he has hated the old one even more than I!



Happy Geoff with the imported Signal Point mower

I bought a simple mower (\$230) online from a Home Depot in Miami, had it shipped (free) to our Miami freight forwarder, and it eventually arrived on the back porch at Signal Point (above). With shipping and tax and duty this cost us about \$350 minus Anders' donation = \$150. It started on the first pull, has zero rust, and does a beautiful job. I will do my level best to prevent Zoom from "borrowing" this for use here and there around the neighborhood. Thanks Anders!

### **Painting of East Bars**

The security bars on the East Porch looked terrible in contrast to the new sliding doors. In the brief 30 minutes when the old doors were out we grabbed the power brush, cleaned rust from the inside that we had never been able to reach, and put on epoxy primer. That was a mad dash before the new doors were put in.

In the days following Dorothy put in a giant effort to clean those bars and paint them first with epoxy finish and then later with cosmetically correct off-white to match the house.



Dorothy choosing her (painting) weapons at the store.

Below she spent hours and hours over several days in this general posture, meticulously recoating the security bars. Check the beautiful new sliding door in this photo.



We all owe Dorothy a giant thanks for all the grinding work she does here, and this all directly impacts the security of our radio equipment and the club's level of pleasure while here using the QTH.

### **Repair of Front Gate**

The front gate drive motor has not worked since our post-COVID return in February of '21. The company made five, yes five trips to the QTH to make repairs. Finally on November 6 a more qualified technician found the problem within five minutes of his arrival, a pulse generator on the motor shaft, and the next day got it working again. In the process we got a completely new circuit board. It was not needed, but new is good and it was money well spent. It's nice to be able to push that button again. Nothing is ever easy here. That invoice was only \$119, and I happily paid it.

## New Rotor (11) in Europe Tower

As you read earlier, I replaced the rotor in the Europe tower just prior to CQWW SSB. Thanks to N7IR for the new rotor he donated – it got here in the nick of time. I'll bring the old rotor back to the States for rebuild. I'm happy to report that the stainless steel bearings, aluminum mast, and cabling all look perfect after three years in the air.

## Help for the Neighborhood Cats



Dorothy and I are cat lovers, but sometimes we have too many of them around here. They watch too many X-rated cat movies, and make too many kittens as a result. In a stroke of great luck in late October, a group of volunteer veterinarians and techs from Holland showed up in our neighborhood to help the kitties (photo above).

They leave traps overnight, catch one cat per night, take him to their hospital near Barber, do the surgery and shots, and return him home the next evening. No charge! We have taken care of six such cats thus far, and the group will return soon to try to capture and fix more of them. Our newly sexless cats around the house are now much happier and healthier, and the headcount is under control for awhile.

We have not seen Steve yet this trip.

## New AL-1200 Tube Is Good

Earlier this year CCC bought a 3CX1200A7 tube from ND8L on the condition that it tested good.

Here's Ray with that tube at his storage locker in Austintown, Ohio, on May 15.



ND8L and the 3CX1200A7 new in box, Ohio, May, 2021

It came to the island on the ocean shipment in September, and I finally got a chance to test it on November 12. After a long slow period of warmup with no RF, and a ramp up from about 500 watts, I made a string of QSOs on 15 CW today at full output and the tube is 100% good. It appears to be brand new, silver and shiny. We are in totally solid condition on amplifiers and spare tubes with the exception of the tubes for the Titan III, which still awaits troubleshooting. I simply have not gotten the time to tackle that yet.

## Update: Vaccinated CCCers

We keep adding to this list as I hear from you.

W0CG (including booster) and Dorothy, N1ZZ, K8IV, K9DR, K8ND, N7IR, VA7AM and Gill, WI9WI and KA9DOC, W9NJY, N7WA, N2BA and N2GSG, VE3CX, SM4KYN and Ingela, K4JC, W8WTS, K0MD, W8PT, W9VA, N7NR, KB7Q and Joyce, K8PGJ, ND8L, NF9V, NA2U, KY7M (including booster), N5OT and family.

Drop me an E-mail if you'd like me to add you to this list.

## Farewell DL8OBQ



Uli departing for PJ4K after 9 days at Signal Point

