



Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium
Editor: W0CG

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CCC Get-Togethers in Northeast Ohio

After over a year of being COVID-barred from entering my own home in Ohio by my son, formerly KB8KIA, I finally made it to Ohio on May 12.

On the following Saturday, the 15th, I met Chuck Patellis (W8PT) and Ray Fallen (ND8L) at the Emerald Diner in Hubbard, Ohio. Ray had started the day in Florida but seemed no worse for the wear after the early get up, flight, and drive up from Pittsburgh.



W8PT and ND8L, Hubbard, Ohio, May 15, 2021

This was extra fun because I had never met Chuck, and Ray and Chuck had not met each other. We probably ate too much and talked too much, but the meeting was great fun. Hubbard is the near northeast suburb of Youngstown, so this was novel for me because I graduated from a high school in Youngstown, and Ray and I figured out that we had probably been at some of the same high school football games in the many years back days of the Poland-Hubbard school rivalries.

You've all heard me yearning to someday own a Dodge Challenger. Big item on my bucket list. And it has to be orange. So I really did a double-take driving into the diner lot and seeing this orange Mustang

parked there. The license plate of "SRMN8TR" tipped me off that this was probably Chuck's ride because he has served for years as a pastor in parallel with his industrial career. Sure enough, it was Chuck's car. My rusty run-out 2002 Corolla did not compare well parked next to this power car.

Chuck had picked up on our "Wish List" request for Bencher paddles, and showed up at the diner with two of them for the station. He's shown below, paddles in hand. Thank you W8PT, and you will be seeing these at the station on a future trip.



W8PT donating two Bencher paddles, May 15, 2021.

PJ2T Acquires Another 3CX1200A7 Tube

As you know, the AL-1200 amp is our PJ2T standard: we have eight of them. They are ideal for us because they are reliable, hard to abuse by mistuning, and can almost always be repaired on site because they have no smart chips or complex circuitry.

The only downside to these amps is that the tube has not been manufactured for years, and retrofitting them for the tube that's available now is difficult. Thus we are constantly on the hunt for tubes for these excellent

amps. ND8L (Ray) let me know a couple of years ago that he had a spare 3CX1200A7 tube in his goodie collection, and I asked him to please hold it until PJ2T could acquire it. Finally I got possession of that tube on May 15 (below).



Ray, ND8L, with the new tube at his Ohio storage locker.

After the lunch in Hubbard with Chuck, I followed Ray to the west side of Youngstown to his Austintown storage locker. Here he is with the tube in the original factory box, and all indications are that it is brand new, having been tested once, showing full power capability, and then reboxed and shelved. There is a printed test report slip in the box and the tube looks perfectly mint. Ray sold us the tube for \$600, an attractive price, and agreed to reverse the transaction if it turned out not to be good when we get it to the island. This tube replaces the one that blew in February. We have several spare tubes on site now, so hope to be able to rely on these AL-1200s for years to come. Ray also had some lengths of 1/2 inch hardline he wanted out of the locker. No ham would say no to this, so those pieces of Heliax went home in my trunk along with the tube.

Reunion with Jim Livengood, W0NB

Long, long ago a distinguished and erudite sounding gentleman approached my table at the Hamvention contest dinner, handed me his business card, and asked if there were some chance that he could be part of our CCC group. That card said he lived at Hansen's Bay on St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands. I was at that time hungrily trying to figure out how to retire to the Caribbean, so Jim, KP2L, grabbed my immediate full attention.

A friendship rapidly evolved, and January 2000 found Jim and I as neighbors across a broad expanse of water

between our respective hills on St. John. Jim and Mary had built two beautiful homes side by side, linked by a swimming pool deck, sometimes using the extra space for family and sometimes renting it out. Cindy (my ex) and I were there for my January-May university academic sabbatical. My employer's requirement for that sabbatical was that I produce lots of scholarly papers, and they cared nothing about where on Earth I was while doing the producing. So I rented a house for five months, produced the requisite manuscripts in the Virgin Islands, grabbed my KP2F callsign, and settled in to experience Caribbean living.

Jim and Mary took us under their wing, introduced us to all the locals, and even sold us their Geo Tracker when they were moving up to a Jeep. Among those friends were Mal (NP2L, SK) and Dan (N1ZZ), both to become long time CCC members. They even graciously gave Cindy a great birthday party and cake at their home on February 8, 2000.

What followed were many years of wonderful fellowship as Jim and Mary made a great many repeated trips to PJ2T. Jim holds the all time CCC record for versatility, having an unimaginable range of skills, an ability to fix anything, and the patience of a saint. Jim was a broadcaster, starting out sweeping floors as a high school kid in Iowa and eventually owning that place and many others. He had to make everything work (same story as K9DR), and thus built an incredible skillset.



Jim repairing an Alpha amplifier, November 24, 2004

Four years ago his doctors advised that he stop traveling to Curacao, and we lost a wonderful contest operator at the site. The dinner table at Signal Point has not ever been quite the same without Jim's stories.

Jim became an octogenarian on May 11 (next page).



I had been missing seeing this great friend when, to my total surprise, his Christmas card in 2020 showed that they had left their longstanding family home in Burlington, Iowa, and relocated to within less than an hour from my Ohio QTH. Finally, COVID began to relent and I was able to visit him and Mary on May 17 at their Chagrin Falls QTH, immediately next door to the home of one of their daughters. We spent six hours getting caught up on news, Jim bought me a wonderful lunch in town, we spent a bit of time (but not enough) in his shack (below), and resolved to continue the conversation next time.



Jim Livengood, W0NB, at his shack in Chagrin Falls, Ohio

Northeast Ohio Visit to W8WTS and Janis

COVID kept us all apart for much too long. I was thrilled to be able to visit Jim, W8WTS (CCC's treasurer) and his XYL, Dr. Janis Galm, a pediatrician, at their home on May 16. I've been friends with them

for many years, and they have been to so many of my family parties at my Ohio QTH that they are now part of the family. In fact Jan was my foster son's pediatrician for the first four years of life.



Dr. Janis Galm, W8WTS' XYL at her medical practice, August 24, 2019

It has been a heck of a year with Jan battling ovarian cancer and Jim trying to do the work of three people running his company, Layer Zero Power Systems. Layer Zero is plagued, as is everyone, by supply chain frustrations and a whole host of COVID-generated challenges. We had a nice dinner at the house and talked for several hours about, believe it or not, many things other than amateur radio.

PA QSO Party Ops Cancel

For three months I have been corresponding with two ops who wanted to go to PJ2T and run the Pennsylvania QSO Party early in October. I had told them that I was willing to go to the station a week earlier than planned in order to support their operation, we had all met on Zoom in a lengthy chat, had done multiple phone conversations, and all seemed to be coming into focus. Then last week they cancelled mainly because they had decided that it was simply too expensive. I wasted a ton of time on this, and it underlines once again why we have stopped renting to non-members. If they call again next year they will not likely get a good reception from me.

Upcoming Events: A Quick Overview

CQWW RTTY 25-26 September: Nobody is signed up.

October 14: DL8OBQ arrives to operate the Worked All Germany contest, hosted by Geoff and Dorothy.

CQWW SSB: W0CG, ND8L, VE4GV, GM4AFF, and N2BA+XYL are signed up. Five beds remain, including the Moran pool house. Where is everybody?

CQWW CW: W0CG, VE3CX, N7IR, K9DR, N2BA, W9NJY, probably NA2U, and probably WI9WI+KA9DOC. Three beds remain in the Moran pool house.

ARRL 160 and 10 Meter Contests (December): W0CG and Dorothy will be on site to host you.

Huge Gift from VE3CX

As many of you saw from a prior E-mail, VE3CX shocked me when, only less than an hour after the May newsletter went out, Tom donated \$800 for a new climbing harness for Signal Point. I had mentioned in the May "Wish List" that we did not have a quality, comfortable, and safe climbing harness at the station, and that something personal like this seemed inappropriate to purchase from Station Support funds.

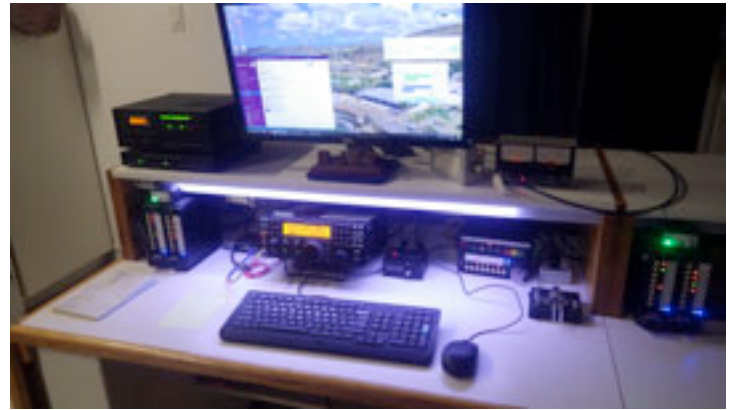


Well. In a matter of minutes the eight hundred landed in my PayPal account from Tom. This is far from the first time he has done something like this, with a long history of fantastic generosity to the club. Armed with the funds, I'll shop very carefully for the right Sala harness, and you'll see me this fall happily climbing in new equipment that is safe and does not agonizingly hurt like the old one does. Thank you Tom.

Notes on Remote Operation of PJ2T

Gene, KB7Q, pioneered remote operation of PJ2T. Long afterward I finally got connected to the remote under Gene's tutelage and had a grand time running pileups from my then antenna-less Idaho condo. Soon K8ND got into the act. Others, including N7WA, WI9WI, KY7M, and NA2U later joined the fun.

Contests have been operated and won from PJ2T via the remote, and thousands of contacts have been made in that way.



PJ2T's remote station in operation on 3.551 MHz during the ARRL DX CW contest, February 20, 2021.

Gene set this all up as an informal exploration into the technology, and as such we have not invested much focused effort or resources into formalizing remoting at PJ2T. Our biggest constraint is that a control operator has to be on site at Signal Point. This is because our gear is far from fully controllable remotely, particularly antenna selection, and because the regulatory bureau has not explicitly sanctioned unattended remote operation in PJ2.

If you'd like to see us as a club group delve further into expanded remote operation at Signal Point please pipe up about your interest, and let's get a reading among the membership about the level of interest in this. Anything is possible with adequate support.

Meanwhile all members are welcome to get involved with our present informal remoting operation and do some experimenting and operating. E-mail Geoff goward@kent.edu or Jeff jmaass@k8nd.com for the latest copy of Gene's superb manual for setting up PJ2T remoting.

Please also don't bug Gene unduly for help. He's a patient teacher and is happy to provide aid to get you pointed in the right direction, but as hams we're all by definition technically literate, and thus we need to follow directions more or less on our own.

VE3CX's New QTH

Tom Haavisto has just bought an 18 acre property about 10 miles east of his present location near Kaministiquia. He already has a good location and antenna farm, but this one will be even mega better, with lots of steel and aluminum planned. Check the map – he's in the general vicinity of Thunder Bay, giving him the distinction of being only one of the

other CCCers who live north of me. Tom and VA7AM, God help us all, live in the northern black hole.

YDXA Youth Operation Cancelled

To our great surprise and disappointment, the long-expected July youth trip to Signal Point was cancelled on May 27. I heard from Jim Storms, AB8YK, that they decided that there was still too much logistical COVID uncertainty for the trip to go forward. This was a surprise because several of us have had trouble free trips to Curacao thus far in 2021, but Jim decided that they had better be conservative. I made sure that he knew that we'd be absolutely ready to host the Dave Kalter Memorial Youth DX Adventure in 2022.

Web Link: CQWW SSB 2021 Planning

GM4AFF has signed on with the SSB team, so the present operator list consists of ND8L, VE4GV, N2BA, W0CG, and GM4AFF. This leaves five open beds. See

<http://www.pj2t.org/ccc/cqww.ssb.2021.preplanning.htm> for the current state of planning for CQWW SSB.

Web Link: CQWW CW 2021 Planning

N2BA signed on recently to work the CW contest in addition to his already planned commitment to the SSB team. Brooke and his XYL (and possibly kids) will stay off site and make a vacation of it, and he will come in to operate on the weekend. Three beds remain for the code contest: two in the Signal Point West Bedroom and the Moran pool house Queen Bedroom.

<http://www.pj2t.org/ccc/cqww.cw.2021.preplanning.htm>

The CW team presently consists of W0CG, N7IR, VE3CX, K9DR, W9NJY, NA2U, WI9WI (hopefully), and N2BA.

CCC Year 22 Membership Cycle Progress Report

As of June 14 14 members have renewed for Year 22. DL8OBQ renewed for two years, a wonderful vote of confidence from Uli that there's value in club membership, and that he expects to stay on board for a long time to come. Three of our members joined a couple months ago and paid their introductory rate dues at that time. This leaves seven yet to be heard from. Additionally, W9NJY has indicated that he will join up this year, and we're very happy to welcome Andy back to the club.

I have been surprised and absolutely stunned by the generosity of our members. To date, five members

have renewed with dues contributions exceeding \$1000: WI9WI, N7WA, VE3CX, K8PGJ, and K8IV. Our dues, at 550, are already quite high, so these additional amounts are staggeringly generous and will be an immense help as we recover from the COVID year. In addition, W8PT has continued his membership as a supporting member who may not ever be able to come to the station. Chuck believes in what we are doing and generously supports it from afar.

Thanks to all for this infusion of resources as we return to full activity on the air.

W8WTS' Treasury Balance

The end of May balance in the Station Support fund was \$2014.65. Dues receipts will not be posted until we have heard from everyone. The big drop in the balance is from purchase on an AL-1200, a 3CX1200A7, and reimbursements of W0CG from on-island purchases and projects.

Bon Voyage to DF9LJ

I'm very sorry to report that Dr. Joerg Sussenbach, DF9LJ, has opted to step away from CCC membership. Joerg is a fantastic CW contester and a fascinating person to know with a PhD in particle physics coupled with years of experience as a top executive at VW. He generously supported CCC through a long period working in China, from which he was unable to make it to Curacao.



DF9LJ and Xi, Thanksgiving Day 2018

One wonderful side benefit of his affiliation with CCC is that Joerg struck up a close friendship with Marty, K2PLF (SK), and Marty visited Joerg on multiple trips to DL. While we're ostensibly a technical club, we're much more a social club. The friendships that evolve from PJ2T are my biggest thrill, and Joerg and Marty are a great case in point.



DF9LJ versus the Signal Point Divi-Divi Tree, 21 November 2018

Joerg has now retired and bought a home in DL and is rapidly turning it into an excellent antenna farm. He wished CCC and PJ2T all the best in our future operations. 73 to Joerg!

Another Paddle: from K8IV

CCC member Ed Polack, K8IV, came to my Ohio home on May 21. He's a nearby neighbor, and also works at DX Engineering. I made a simple dinner and, miraculously, neither of us subsequently developed food poisoning. Ed brought a gorgeous mint Bencher paddle complete with a plexiglass dust cover for PJ2T and a bag full of 10 rolls of Scotch 33. Thanks to Ed and NA2U we are in much improved shape on the tape inventory at the station.



K8IV-donated paddle and its dustproof garage

Most of the PJ2T anniversary glasses are at my Ohio home, so I didn't miss the opportunity to send Ed away with a box of 24 of them. Part of these cover the order he made and paid for last year, and he will distribute the rest to contesters in the area and at DX Engineering.



K8IV with a case of CCC 20th Anniversary glasses

As he was departing Ed and I gazed up in despair at the 48 foot boom of one of my 20 meter monobanders, broken in half, one half stuck in a tree and the other clinging to life in the ring rotor. Getting that down was simply beyond my capability working alone, so the project is deferred until September.

Our PJ2T Wish List

THANK YOU for the stunning response to the wish list in the May newsletter. My gosh!

- \$800 for climbing harness, VE3CX
- Two Bencher paddles, W8PT
- Bencher paddle and cover, K8IV
- 10 rolls Scotch 33, K8IV
- 20 rolls Scotch 33, NA2U
- Upcoming Bencher paddle, N5OT
- Upcoming ARRL Handbook, tape, drill bits, and nut driver, K4JC
- Bencher paddle from W1FJ

