



# Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium  
Editor: W0CG

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## Curacao COVID Travel Update

The CDC presently lists Curacao at COVID-19 Level 4, "Very High Risk." They recommend that Americans avoid travel to Curacao, and if choosing to travel they should be vaccinated, of course. Because of this NA2U, N7IR, and W9NJY have opted to cancel their trips in November. I point out that W9NJY is an Internal Medicine M.D., so his decision is based on a sound and complete medical evaluation of the risks.

See

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/curacao> .

It is up to each of us to evaluate the risks and make a personal travel decision. Dorothy and I will be traveling to the island on October 12, and we will have updates on the situation for you right after arrival.

Counterintuitively, COVID testing requirements have eased somewhat since the last newsletter.

- Entry to Curacao
  - Negative PCR test taken "at most 48 hours before your flight to Curacao."
  - (This is easier because it references your departing flight to Curacao instead of your arrival in Curacao.)
- Once in Curacao
  - Negative rapid antigen test on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day in Curacao. This is easily scheduled online before you leave the U.S. Dorothy and I did this in April. It is very fast (20 minutes), cheap (\$20), and results come in less than half an hour.
- Returning to the U.S.

- Negative rapid antigen test taken no more than three days before the flight departs from Curacao.
- This is much easier than the prior requirement of 24 hours prior to arriving in the U.S.

If you test positive while on the island, quarantine is permitted in private homes such as Signal Point, where the stay is free, the radios are available 24/7, and Geoff and Dorothy will feed you into overweight.

You can read all of the above for yourself at

<https://www.curacao.com/en/article/travel-updates>

## Contest Event Status

**CQWW SSB:** GM4AFF cancelled his flight booking because of his concerns about sitting on a plane next to someone who might be infected. This leaves a team of ND8L, VE4GV, W0CG, KL2A, NN3W, and N2BA+Eve. We met on Zoom two weeks ago and decided to proceed with the operation, including the rental house, even though individual expenses are higher because of cancelled commitments. We will get on the air and do all possible to make you proud of PJ2T. Four beds remain for CQWW SSB. K8PGJ is a possibility if Grand Cayman remains closed.

**CQWW CW:** W9NJY, N7IR, and NA2U cancelled because of COVID concerns, and VE3CX cancelled because he has run short on vacation days from work this year. NA2U very generously offered to cover his lodging cost even though he opted out. This is a great help to the pocketbooks of those still going. Thus our now very small CW team is K9DR, W19WI+KA9DOC, W0CG, and N2BA. WA7LNW, VA3WB, and AA7A were seriously considering joining us for WW CW but all have opted out. We will do a Multi/Single or possibly multiple single band efforts. This is indeed extremely discouraging.

**ARRL 160 and 10 Meter Contests (December):** W0CG and Dorothy will be on site to host you. If nobody is brave enough to show up, W0CG will again run 10 meters as a single op if nobody else wants it.

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

**ARRL DX CW:** Our favorite February event will include W0CG, W9NJY, hopefully W9VA, and all other seats are still wide open. It will be sad to run this contest without our beloved friends Keith and Marty, but they sure will never be forgotten. Can you join us in February 2022?

**ARRL DX SSB:** N1ZZ and his PCARS (Melbourne, FL) group plan to 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:** K4UEE has multiple Georgia contesters signed up and is recruiting more. We have the Moran pool house reserved and Dorothy will still be on site in late March.

### Internet Outage at QTH

This scares me more than COVID. The connectivity at Signal Point has been down for nearly three weeks. This is far and above the longest outage in my 21 years of living there. Most of the other houses in the neighborhood are also off, not only losing DSL but also the wireline phone capability. The government PTT, UTS, was privatized last year. The new operator, Flow, has made a disastrous mess of things, and thousands of phones are out all over the island with no real idea of when service will return. This is having a dramatically bad impact on conduct of business in the country, and will compromise our contesting and quality of life at the QTH if this is not fixed soon.



My Curacao cell phone, which is supported by Digicel, still works perfectly for voice calls, but that is of no help with the Internet.

### Update on the Ocean Shipment

The NR0X-donated Commander HF-2500 amplifier is here in Ohio now. I will be packing the ocean shipment next week and send it south. It includes rotors and control boxes, the amp, Bencher paddles, the new climbing harness from VE3CX, an Auttek WM-1, a set of custom new blinds for the house, and lots of miscellaneous items. I also plan to drop ship a new lawn mower (thanks SM4KYN) to the freight forwarder direct from a Home Depot in Miami.

### W0CG and Dorothy Trip Report

Dorothy and I headed east as planned on August 25 after weeks of logistical setup.

We were privileged to be served a fabulous lunch at the home of KB7Q and Joyce in Bozeman, Montana, below.



KB7Q and Joyce at home

As you see, Gene and Joyce take their Curacao travel seriously, and have this gorgeous canvas-wrapped photo of Great Santa Marta Bay in their home. They filled us up with too much wonderful food, capped off with ice cream and red velvet cupcakes for the road. I was still chomping those cupcakes down days later!

Thank also to them for the donation of a safety bar for the West Bathroom. That item will be part of the ocean shipment.



W0CG, Dorothy, KB7Q in Bozeman

If you look closely at the right you can see that Gene indeed does live at an address of 3830 (!!), and also see that my Ohio vanity plate on the minivan sports my Curacao personal callsign.

After a night in Hardin, MT, near the Little Bighorn battlefield, we pressed on eastbound on US 212 in the southeast corner of Montana. I had looked ahead of time and there were no postings of construction on 212, but we came upon several miles where the road was down to one way single lane and nothing but mud.



At one point the vehicle bottomed out in inches deep mud and it was questionable if we would even make it up that hill. After getting through we were assaulted by fires burning on both sides of the road just east of Lame Deer. Finally things smoothed out and we exited into Wyoming onto a paved, wide road. Phew.

The next photo shows an innovative, but probably not very effective way to reinforce your tower. I grabbed

this shot in Redwood Falls, Minnesota. Looks like it has been years since this guy mowed his tower.



Reinforced tower in Redwood Falls, MN

Later that day we were thrilled to meet with Dr. Scott Wright, K0MD, in Rochester. We began with a shack tour and walkaround of Scott's magnificent antenna farm, then moved downtown where Scott treated us to a wonderful dinner literally across the street from the many Mayo Clinic buildings downtown. You may recall that Scott was interviewed on the "Today" show by NBC news earlier this year, and we featured that in this newsletter.



Dorothy, K0MD, W0CG, Rochester, MN

The following photo shows K0MD with one of his four 80 meter full size four square verticals (DX Engineering) in his front yard. I have long fancied one

of these by the seaside in Curacao, with a saltwater counterpoise in the direction of the U.S.



K0MD at home

After seeing this beautiful, beefy hardware at Scott's I am more tempted than ever to try it in Curacao.

This was my first opportunity to spend some real time with K0MD, Dayton not being supportive of quiet extended conversation. We had a wonderful time. Scott has a massive list of internationally important professional accomplishments but, like most contesters, is humble, very very pleasant, and a complete delight to know.

The next morning we pressed south to the QTH of NR0X (below) near Martelle, Iowa.



Jason Joens, NR0X and W0CG in Eastern Iowa

Jason is PJ2T's professional climber and rigger. After two and a half years of trying, we were finally able to pick up the Commander HF-2500 amplifier that Jason so generously donated to CCC. He takes care of a

massive farm that grows food and antennas, and is still recovering from the horrible derecho windstorm that took down towers and antennas and led to a broken leg. Jason's limp is diminishing, and he hopes to be back on the towers in Curacao in early 2022. THANKS Jason!!

Dorothy and I overnighted in Peoria, Illinois, then on Sunday, August 29 made a stop at WB9Z (below).



W0CG and WB9Z, Crescent City, Illinois

Jerry was an early 2000s intensely active PJ2T operator, running many contests from Signal Point and spending long stays at the QTH over Christmas for several years.

Embarrassingly, it took me all this time to finally get to see his famous mega-station. The antennas and towers seem to stretch to the horizon in all directions, everything is done professionally and correctly, and the flat Illinois cropland is magnificently beautiful to my eye. After growing up at the bottom of a narrow valley in West Virginia, I came to love flat ground and the accompanying big sky, no disrespect to Montana.

Since those early days in Curacao, Jerry and I went through terrible divorces almost concurrently and emerged out the other side of that process very happy and with new, better lives. All of us know Val, NV9L, and the two of them have become by far the most famous contesting couple on the planet. They kindly autographed their photos on the cover of the *CQ* magazine I had hauled from Idaho. Then Val and Dorothy headed off for a station tour in one vehicle, and Jerry and I in another. The photo (next page) shows Dorothy with Val and Jerry, ready to pop a wheelie.



As we chatted Jerry asked what we might need for PJ2T. He raved about VE3CX's generosity in seeing to it that we had a quality professional climbing harness, and asked about what my climbing partner might wear. I had to confess that any co-climber in Curacao would have inferior equipment. With that Jerry hauled me into the equipment building to a rack of LOTS of climbing harnesses, and said to pick one out! This was like being turned loose in the DX Engineering stock building with a blank check and nobody looking.

On Jerry's advice, I went off with a slightly lighter weight harness in beautiful condition to take to Curacao along with the ocean freight. THANK YOU WB9Z, and I can't wait to get this great new equipment in service on the island.

Also, I mentioned that we had some 250 feet of very old Heliacx on the island that had the 1960s Helical shield instead of the more modern collinear ribbing. K9DR had previously explained to me that this requires special very hard to find connectors. Jerry said "I'll look." Then sure enough last week an envelope arrived at my Ohio QTH from WB9Z, chock full of the needed connectors. K0MD and I discussed in Rochester that Jerry's generosity to anyone and everyone is wonderful, and my visit to Crescent City upheld that rep. THANK YOU Jerry for all you have done for PJ2T. Can't wait to see you and Val in the chairs down there.

Dorothy and I pressed on east after the stop at Jerry and Val's and arrived at the Ohio house about 10:00 PM. Long day, long trip, and 2340 miles from Idaho on the old 2005 Grand Caravan odometer.

## Rare Signs of W0CG's Maturity

This is about the W0CG station, not PJ2T, but I include it here as a precursor to Signal Point's future. The time will come when I admit that I need climbing help in Curacao, in the form of NR0X. Two weeks ago I already admitted to that by bringing in Tim Jellison, W3YQ, to get me out of an impossible mess at the Ohio place. Tim is the fellow who took care of the tower and crane work on December 4, 2018, replacing the 100 foot Rohn 55 tower at Signal Point, donating all of his professional time and even picking up his own airfare. He lives within reasonable driving range of my Ohio place, so he very kindly put me on his professional climbing schedule for September 6.



W3YQ ready to get high at W0CG, Suffield, Ohio

The job here was very tricky. One of my five element 20 meter monobanders, with a 48 foot boom, had broken in half at the Ringrotor. I have not lived here regularly since 2008, so maintenance was very far behind. The back half of the antenna was lodged in the top of a pine tree, next page, hanging on boom truss cables and coax. Ugly. It had been like this since April.



W3YQ wrestling with scrap metal in a tree.

Much worse, the front 24 feet of the monobander were still in the Ringrotor, below.



This is a fearsome situation. It is incredible that the TIC ring successfully supported this monster unbalanced, heavy load, for so many months. Imagine the twisting moment at the tower. This thing is HEAVY. Incredibly, Tim patiently figured it out, rigged it up, and got it on the ground with the help of his capstan on the hitch of his minivan, and my foster grandson and me on the ropes.

Following this, he went to the top of the 140 foot tower, removed a VHF beam that had been stuck up there, damaged to shreds, since 1998 (!) and installed a dual band 144/430 vertical in its place. Tim then shot photos of the prop pitch, brought down a damaged Ring motor, and cleaned up several more messes on this tower. Huge thanks to W3YQ for reducing my stress dramatically with all of this fixed, and I am on the air now and making some QSOs after years away from the W0CG station.

All of this may be a sign of aging, or a sign of my growing maturity, or both, but I need to start throttling back on climbing as time goes by. This work on September 6 was a start on that.

### Birthday Event at W0CG

On September 12 Dorothy and I threw a big birthday party at the W0CG home for ourselves. I was 72 on September 9 and she 64 on August 30. Among the 27 people here were privileged to have several hams. To talk to, not to eat.

The photo shows Jim Livengood, W0NB and formerly KP2L, at our party. What a delight to have him and Mary here.



Jim Livengood, W0NB, at the W0CG QTH September 12, 2021

Jim was intensely active from PJ2T for many years before his doctor suggested that he throttle back somewhat. He turned 80 a few months ago. He can fix *anything*, from leaking toilets to disagreeable linear amplifiers, is a superb CW operator, and kept us all entertained at the Signal Point dinner table with story after story. He owned a beautiful home on St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands for years and helped me and Cindy (my ex) immeasurably during our time living on St. John in 2000. Jim and Mary spent their years in Burlington, Iowa, where Jim owned broadcasting companies. They recently relocated to Chagrin Falls, Ohio, to be near family, and now I'm fortunate to have him as a nearby neighbor.

When Dorothy and I stopped at NR0X in Iowa, Jason handed us a Tailtwister rotor as an additional donation to PJ2T. In the most remarkable of all remarkable coincidences, it was the self same rotor that had been in service at Jim's ham station in Burlington, and before that at one of his commercial broadcast stations.

The photo on the previous page shows Jim reunited with his own rotor in my Ohio backyard!

Our birthday party has occurred for a great many years here at the Ohio house, and it has informally come to be known as The Feast of the Carnivores. This is primarily because of the prime rib that I serve. The photo shows me working on the roast after it came out of the hours in the oven, getting ready to serve. We have a huge and excellent family owned meat market just two miles from the Ohio house. Don't expect this at Signal Point! Burgers are more our speed in Curacao.



Chefgeoff carving a 13 pound prime rib roast.

Following are Steve, N8LGP and Ed, K8IV, both CCCers, at the birthday party. Steve was very active at the QTH in the early years, and he built all of the yagis for Curacao. Over a long period of months, Steve assembled, rebuilt, and improved multiple old beams in his house nearby in Cuyahoga Falls, then prepped them all for shipment to Curacao in the winter of 2000. Months later we opened up all of those packages on Curacao, and quickly assembled everything thanks to Steve's color coded tape markings and engraved guides on the booms and elements. Presto, it was easy. NONE of these N8LGP antennas ever failed. Steve is a professional machinist, and it shows!!



Steve, N8LGP and Ed, K8IV at the W0CG+Dorothy party September 12

If Steve is "old" PJ2T, Ed is "new." Ed is a fairly new member, has already been to the island once, and will be coming again when his busy life permits. You may recognize Ed as an equipment model in the DX Engineering catalog, where he works. This photo is long after all the food has been chomped.

Ed has been extremely generous in supporting PJ2T and Signal Point, and we look forward to having him on the air from Curacao as soon as possible.



Longsuffering ham radio XYLs: Mary Livengood, Dee Ulichney, and their husbands N8LGP and W0NB, preparing to depart after the birthday party. These ladies are incredibly supportive of our joint affliction.

### Rotors and Autek Have Arrived in Ohio

Huge thanks to N7IR for shipping two Tailtwisters and control boxes to the W0CG Ohio QTH. There's also a much needed Autek WM-1 wattmeter in that grouping.

