



# Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium  
Editor: W0CG

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## Best PJ2T Drone Photo in History

Here's an absolutely fantastic photo by K8ND from his drone, best ever, with the Ridge antenna system in the foreground and Signal Point far below. Sunday, September 18, 2022.

This is the Ridge system that few of you have ever seen, a Bencher Skyhawk tribander donated by K2PLF

(SK) and an 80 meter dipole, all fed and controlled via one very long length of Heliac.

As you know, K8ND is an expert drone pilot, properly licensed and certified for operation both in the States and on the island of Curacao. We all benefit from his incredible photos and videos, including the November *QST* cover shot. Thanks Jeff.

## Hotel Construction Site Update

As confirmed by drone videos that K8ND sent on September 11, precisely nothing has happened at the hotel construction site since my departure on July 21. On September 13 K8ND observed a modest amount of dirt-moving along the old road, but no large scale purposeful construction has happened since July. Arriving on October 12 we saw some work on the grade for the new road, but little other activity.

## CQWW SSB Contest Update

Dorothy and I arrived on the island October 12, and now she and Uli and I are working hard to get everything assembled and working for the CQWW SSB team's arrival. We have a large and diverse team of ops, only three of whom are CCC members. (Where is everybody?) If you're curious, here's the operator schedule for that contest.

<http://www.pj2t.org/ccc/CQWSSB2022/draft.op.schedule.cqww.ssb.2022.revision.1.htm>

## CQWW CW Contest Team Complete

Our CW team is now complete, including W0CG, W8WTS (tentative), K9DR, VE3CX, VE3JM+XYL, VE3EY+XYL, W9NJY, N7IR, NA2U, and KY7M. We will hoist a maple leaf flag in the shack alongside the flag of the State of Arizona!

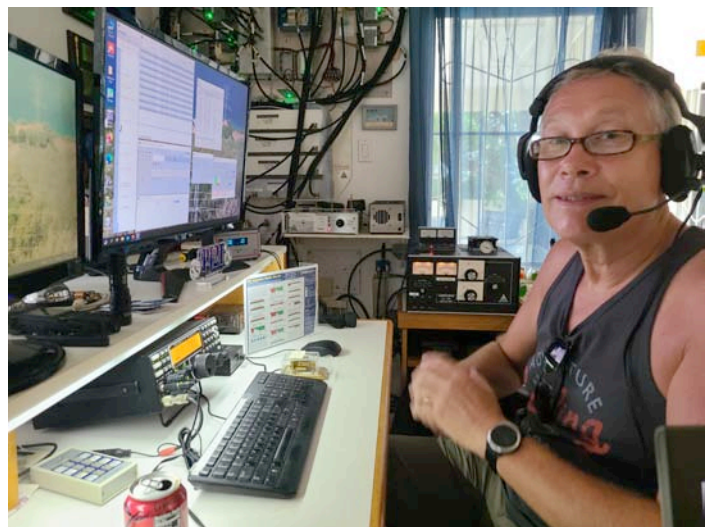
## CCC Mini-Meeting in Ohio

ND8L arranged for this dinner meeting on September 12. Left to right, next column, are Ray (ND8L), Ed (K8IV), W0CG, Dorothy, (XYL W8PT), and Chuck (W8PT). Four CCC members getting together at Cockeye's Barbeque, Warren, Ohio. Ray was north from Florida, Ed and Dorothy and I went east to Youngstown from Akron, and the Patellis's came southeast from Middlefield. We ate too much and had ice cream afterward. It was a great opportunity to see folks we too seldom can get together with, and to discuss the ARRL club grant application as well. Thanks to Ray for arranging this!



CCC Mini-Meeting, Warren, Ohio, September 12, 2022

## PH2M Visits Signal Point



Frank, PH2M

K8ND was kind enough to host Frank de Wilde, PH2M, at Signal Point on September 22. Jeff said he ran about two and a half hours of SSB QSOs and had a grand time. It's always a great pleasure to share the club station with any and all visitors. (This photo appears again in Jeff's story, following.)

## End of Month Balance

At the end of September the balance in the Station Support fund was \$7508.23. Thanks to W8WTS for keeping up with the club's financial details in the midst of the crisis of Jan's illness.

## Remote KPA-1500 Is Now at KY7M

It is now confirmed that we will have a KPA-1500 on site at Signal Point, dedicated to the enhanced remote station. That amp is now at KY7M. The next challenge is to get it to the island.

I am happy to report that Lee, KY7M, stepped right up and agreed to take the lead on transporting to PJ2T the KPA1500 amp being loaned to the station for the remote operating enhancement project. Lee will bring the amp with him when he goes to PJ2T for the CQWW CW test in November. In the meantime, Lee will test the amp to make sure it is operating at 100% following its shipment to him. Because the amp is comprised of two separate modules (the amp and the power supply), Lee reports that Fred, NA2U, will bring the second module when he likewise travels to the PJ2T site for CQWW CW. This will be a big help to the CCC because using a reputable international courier to ship the amp to PJ2T would be surprisingly expensive!

### Photo Stray



Dorothy at DX Engineering, Tallmadge, Ohio, September 13, with more parts for the Enhanced Remote

### Curacao Amateur Licenses, by Jeff Maass K8ND PJ2ND

When I was in the process of renewing my PJ2ND Amateur Radio license, I noted that the license specified that I had 'License Class C'. I wondered what that 'Class C' meant, and whether I was in some way limited.

The application for renewal, as well as the application for a special callsign, lists the Amateur bands available, and lists the license classes as A, B, C, F, and N.

I asked Brett PJ2BR, President of VERONA, for a clarification of Amateur licensing on Curacao. Here is what he told me.

*Well, the Bureau chose a rather unconventional way to structure their license classes.*

*A = Full license, all ham radio spectrum privilege. CW ham test required. This class has been dropped.*

*B = Almost the same class as A, with some HF bands restrictions. CW (slower) test required. This class has also been dropped.*

*C = VHF and above, all modes. Now here is where it gets interesting. Around the year 2005, CW requirements were dropped. What did the Bureau do, they equalized the C class with the A class, then dropped the A from their license types. So now C has become the new A, full privilege type license. They hope to rebrand it to call it F (Full) license class in the future.*

*N = Novice, VHF/UHF class. We are trying to sync this license class with the CEPT recommendations to add a few HF bands to it.*

So, my 'Class C' license is the license with full privileges.



### ARRL Club Grant Application News

Undaunted by the first rejection, Ray, ND8L, is plowing forward with a re-application in Round Two. The revised ask is \$5K, scaled back from the original \$25K, and the central theme of the request is support and growth of young contesters.

We all owe Ray a great big thanks for the time and thought he has invested into this project.

### Thanks ND8L – Another PJ2T PC

The photo (next page) shows a superb homebrew PC that Ray has donated to the station. We'll get it to Curacao in January. Dorothy and I traveled south on October 12 with 300 pounds of luggage in six cases, and did not have the capacity to bring this computer on this trip. Thanks Ray! I'll have more details on what's under the hood in a future newsletter.



ND8L PC Donated to PJ2T

## September Trip Report, PJ2/K8ND, by Jeff Maass K8ND PJ2ND

### PLANNING A RETURN TO CURACAO

Following my ‘medical adventure’ (reported here earlier), I was considering when I felt sufficiently recovered to travel again to the island. When I stayed in December and January, I was already sick and getting sicker, and the travel back through the Miami airport was difficult. I wanted to assure myself that I had the stamina to make the next trip with minimum problems.

I was considering a July non-contest trip, but decided I wasn’t yet ready to travel. I inquired about possibly joining the CQWW SSB team in October, but the team was full (and I really prefer to avoid large Multi-Multi operations), so I settled on September for a non-contest stay, and used a flight credit I had from a cancelled flight in January (plus some significant cash, as the cost of airline tickets had increased) to book flights for a trip September 8 to 27.

### ARRIVAL

I arrived as scheduled on September 8 with no airline travel issues. I was traveling light – just two checked bags this trip. On the way to the house, I stopped at the New California Market to get some initial groceries. Normally, I don’t stop on the way from the airport, as I don’t want to park with exposed suitcases. However, this trip all my bags fit in the trunk out of sight, so I felt safe making the stop.

The house, which had been closed since Geoff departed in July, had been prepared by Zoom, with the barbeque and white table moved outdoors. I burrowed a hole through ‘furniture mountain’ in the East bedroom to get to a radio for use at Station 1 and to get the required shopping bags and cooler for grocery runs.

Other than a few chairs (for West porch and pavilion), I did not spend any time moving outdoor furniture out of the East bedroom.

I set myself up at Station #1 as is my habit, with a side table, my laptop, and a radio.

### ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES – RESIDENCE PERMIT

My purposes in making this trip were several. During the pandemic, my residence status and PJ2ND license had expired after their 5-year terms, and needed to be renewed. These could only be done in person on the island.

Renewal of the residence status and receipt of a new sedula (ID card) is a three-step process. The first step was an interview with Immigration at their office in Punda during which they would stamp my USA passport to reflect my residence status; second was a visit at the registry office at Kranshi (the ‘town hall’) in the center of Otrabanda where they would register my new stamp; and third was another visit to Kranshi a week later to have my photo taken and my new sedula issued. The first and third of these required appointments made in advance, which I accomplished through the company ‘Dos Mundos’ before I left for the island.

This process went smoothly except for step 2. After getting the stamp in my passport at Immigration, I drove to the other side of Willemstad (Otrabanda) and found one of the rare places to park. Walking down the street to Kranshi (a beautiful old building), I was met by several security people who were sending everyone away. Seems the Registry computer system was down, and I was advised to come back “tomorrow (i.e. Wednesday) or Saturday”! Two days later, I asked the kind folks at Dos Mundos to confirm that the office would be open, and then set off again to Kranshi. This time, I was parked, completed my task at Kranshi, and back on the road in less than 30 minutes!

My appointment for Step 3 was a week later, and once again it went smoothly and I was done in less than 30 minutes with my new sedula in hand for the next 5 years!



The hall of bureaucratic terrors. –Ed.

## ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES – PJ2ND LICENSE RENEWAL

To renew the PJ2ND license, I made contact by email with the Bureau Telecommunicatie en Post (BTP), and received the required application form. This I completed and sent back before I departed for the island. I was hoping that the renewed PJ2ND license would be forthcoming early in the trip so I could use it on-the-air while there, but this was not to be the case!

I didn't do too much operating, making only 1950 QSOs as PJ2/K8ND while waiting. Early on, the 10 and 12 meter bands were strongly open to Europe, and I made ~300 QSOs on 10 meters and 200 QSOs on 12 meters, all on CW.

I was contacted a week after my arrival to set up a visit from the Inspectors from the BTP to inspect "my" station (i.e. PJ2T). Two gentlemen came out on September 15 at the appointed time, took many photos, wrote down radio serial numbers for the two Elecraft K3 radios then installed (Station 1 and the remote, Station 4). They already knew about the radios in storage, as they had inspected the station for the PJ2T license and five years earlier for my PJ2ND license, so in all they recorded six serial numbers.

All went well, with conversation largely about the history of the station going back to John Thompson and PJ9JT. I signed their report, and they departed. I expected that, with this formality resolved, I would be contacted to come down to the BTP office to pay my license fee and collect my renewed license. It was not to be that simple!



With a week remaining in my stay, I emailed BTP to inquire about the status of my renewal, and heard nothing back. I sent another email on the weekend before departure, pointing out that I was only available to come to the BTP office on Monday, as I departed on Tuesday. On Monday morning, I received an email from Ms. Jovanka Roosburg-Bloeiman at BTP, asking me to come to BTP. It included a bit of mystery:

“Can you be here at 2 pm. Then I can explain a condition.

And you can make the payment of Naf. 286.98.”

I was a bit confused what the 286.98 Guilders might be for (I had not paid such a large amount when my license was first issued), and what "condition" might be at issue. So, I traveled to the BTP building and met with Ms Roosburg, who proved to be a pleasant and friendly person who was clearly expediting my renewal so I could have it before I departed the island. The largest part of the FL 286.98 fee was a per-radio charge of FL25 for each of the six K3 radios "seen" during the inspection at "my" station! There was also a charge for the inspection itself, a pro-rated annual license fee, and a FL100 fee for the 5-year license. I paid, and was handed my official PJ2ND license, good for the next five years! I made a total of 29 QSOs with the PJ2ND callsign on my last evening on the island as I packed and closed out the house.

## VISITOR TO THE STATION

A few weeks before my trip, I saw a mention on Facebook that Frank PH2M would be visiting Curacao during the period of my stay. I extended an emailed

invitation for him to visit Signal Point, take a tour, and sit at Station 1 for some operating if he wanted. He and his XYL were staying at Villapark Fontein, about a 15 minute drive from Signal Point. He was operating exclusively on FT8 on bands 60 – 10 meters from that site. He came out to Signal Point on September 22, got a tour, and spent 2.5 hours making 163 SSB QSOs on 15-meters.



Frank, PH2M

#### MISCELLANEOUS TASKS & NOTES

The remote station was brought online, but was having a variety of connection problems with multiple remote users. I finally tracked the majority of these to a loose DB-25 serial connection between RRC box and the K3 radio. Once that was resolved, things were stable and the remote station was usable.

I saw only two cats during my stay. Crawford, the black-and-white cat with the huge fuzzy tail was most present and seemed to like to hang out on the West porch under or on one of the two chairs I put out. The other cat seldom seen was a small tabby that was incredibly loud when Crawford was also present. They did not seem to be friends! The cat feeder on the East porch was ‘savaged’ in the dark by some critter (I suspect a dog), knocking it down and emptying it out. I restored it and filled it before I left.

I had a new experience when the propane tank for the stove became empty. With the aid of Geoff on a Zoom video call, the spare propane tank was swapped in and stove operation restored. The empty tank was refilled at the Tera Cora Pumpstation for FL16 and stored away for the next time.

#### HOTEL GROUNDWORK & DRONE PHOTOGRAPHY

I have been taking drones to the island with me since 2018, most recently a pair of DJI Mavic 2 Pro models (one primary, one spare). I have done the paperwork with CCAA (the Curacao FAA) and BTP (the Curacao FCC) to approve my use of these drones. I flew several times, in part to see what was underway with the groundwork associated with the development of the new hotel site.

During my stay, there were a digger and a bulldozer working to build the new roadway to the North of the existing road. Much of the work is flattening the terrain and moving dirt from below to up above.



The huge mountain of hotel debris has been reduced to a small hill of concrete with much rebar.



All that remains of Mount Dirt –Ed.

The best of my drone photos have been posted to the PJ2T Facebook page, and I invite you to view them there. Here is one of my favorites from this trip, showing PJ2T and the denuded ‘flats’ to the West.



## Curacao Travel Report: W0CG and Dorothy, 12 October

Dorothy and I left our Ohio house early in the morning hours of Wednesday, October 12, and arrived on the island at 1:25 that afternoon, just a few hours later. This was her first experience with NOT coming here from Idaho over a two day, 37 clock hour ordeal. We stopped at Kooyman, Better Deals, and the grocery store after picking up the car and still made it to the house by 4 PM.



Sunrise over South Carolina, 7 AM, October 12

The notable part of our trip is that we dragged 300 pounds of luggage across six pieces, five checked and one carryon. The photo (next column) shows me nervously watching one of our five bags be loaded at MIA from my spot in 14F. Unlike the check-in lady at Cleveland, who literally threw our bags onto the belt, the gentlemen at MIA were very careful.



Loading PJ2T remote components at MIA

The AA baggage tracking feature on the AA app works beautifully, and we were confident that everything would arrive with us in Curacao.

At airport Customs the inspectors were waving almost everyone through. Naturally, with my bad luck, they stopped me, made me put all pieces on the X-ray belt, and had me open two pieces to raised eyebrows and lots of interest from the inspector. The explanations about amateur radio were not enough, so I finally offered up the invoices for the rotor, the Astron supply, and one Foscam. They charged \$102 duty and looked the other way on the other four bags. We got off easy. Jeff Maass is much better at dodging duty, but they get me every time.

Our long-term leased car was waiting for us, and we went straight to Better Deals where I bought a small Acer monitor for the dedicated remote station. Then on to Kooyman where I picked up exactly what I had wanted – two 48 x 16 inch pieces of very heavy duty plasticized shelf material for the remote, then on to Centrum for food.

It was an enormous pleasure to unload the 300 pounds of stuff into Signal Point, then end of a long journey that started in Idaho for part of this materiel. Now installation can begin.

### Cisco Gigabit IP Switch Installed

In early August we bought a new IP switch to replace the slow 20 year old unit. It's a Cisco Business CBS250-24T-4G Smart Switch | 24 Port GE | 4x1G SFP. The IP switch is a part of PJ2T that hardly anybody ever sees. It is installed in the back of the desk console below the Station 3 amplifier, and distributes IP data to all the PCs in the shack. It also supports the laser printer, laptops that visitors sometimes plugg in, and other IP accessories.

When we got the fiber running in late July it tested 153 MB, but we were only getting 6 MB at the shack computers because of the old IP switch bottleneck. I installed the new Cisco switch on October 13, and now we are seeing 150 MBPS at all devices in the shack. Here's the new Cisco switch in place.



Our Cisco 4 GB IP switch

I owe a giant thanks to KB7Q who helped me troubleshoot the switch installation. Some of the machines were seeing the IP ports and others insisted on defaulting to the old router. After much head-scratching Gene finally recommended that I power down the ASUS router, and that successfully forced the errant machines to find new IP credentials through DHCP, and all was well. Gene also suggested that we connect the ASUS router directly to the optical fiber Sercomm router, and that brought all the wireless devices and Ring cameras back to life.

Thanks also to K8ND who hauled the Cisco switch to the island in September and talked it through customs with no duty. Jeff had recommended that I install the new switch upside down to keep the ports clean, but the physical layout behind the desk made that impossible. He provided port cover plugs, and I installed them on all the unused ports.

This simplified network topology will serve us well as we expand remoting activities, and we are seeing unheard of speed in the shack now.

### Fluke 77 III Multimeter Repaired

K8ND found our old yellow Fluke multimeter DOA and sent it to N7IR in Arizona for evaluation.



On October 9 Gary reported that he replaced the corroded battery clip and installed a new battery, and all is working perfectly. He will return it to the island on his November CQWW CW trip. Thanks again to PJ2T's Station Equipment Lead N7IR who seems to be able to fix pretty much ANYthing with his patience and well-equipped bench in Chandler.

### Enhanced Remote – Initial Photos

The photo, from about 30 minutes before press time, shows me in a very precarious position on a ladder drilling anchor holes in the concrete for the shelf brackets. This top shelf will carry the amplifier and tuner, Astron power supply, several cooling fan assemblies, the PC, and a PC monitor. The shelf below, not yet installed, will have the transceiver, more fans, a mouse and keyboard, and all of the AC power control and distribution cabling.



October 14, Geoff installing the top shelf for the enhanced remote

Here's Dorothy (next page) assembling one of four muffin fan modules for the remote.

