Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium
Editor: W0CG

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PJ2T Enhanced Remote Construction Is COMPLETE

On the afternoon of November 10 my diagonal cutters said "clip," and with the removal of that final tie wrap tail, the construction is totally complete. What a huge project – it feels good to have reached this milestone.

Now we await arrival on November 22 of the KPA-1500 amp, on loan to us from N7NR, and to be transported here by KY7M and NA2U. I installed a separate shelf for the amp's power supply, and the 220 AC power, grounding leads and lugs, and coax are in position waiting to quickly install that amplifier.

Gene's screen at the remote end in Bozeman

The beta users have been doing well. Gene has made hundreds of remote CW contacts (10 meters into Europe is fantastic), and is finding the system to be solid with our new fast fiber Internet connection. The RCFORBS server is performing well, and there have been no problems as of yet with the remote controlled antenna switching system. Gene has written a fabulous and simple manual for users, and updates it almost daily as we learn more and the system settles down. Also, we have had a couple of Zoom sessions, and those will continue, for anyone interested in an on-site tour of this new station which, again, does NOT require the hard to get RRC interface box.

We've drafted a document about how we might administer and finance operation of the remote station, and all of that is presently in draft awaiting comments and revision. Using the remote will be cheap, will not cost non-remote-user CCC members anything, and will be restricted to only CCC members. More on all that later. For now, please get on and use it.

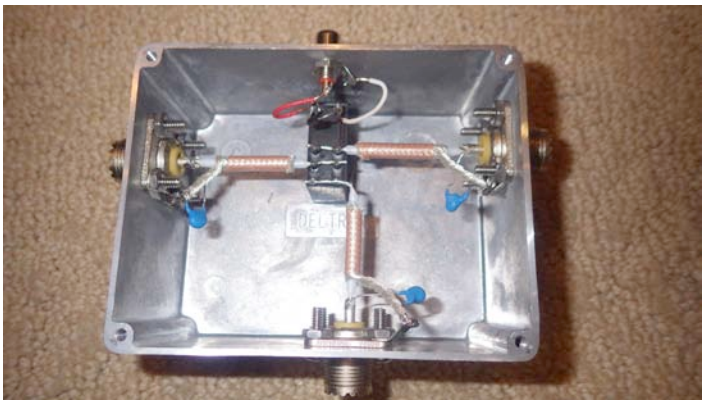
Over time we will make incremental improvements and will produce system diagrams. I am hoping K8ND will be available to do his usual beautiful computer renderings of my hand-drawn system diagrams and schematics. We'll have full diagrams both for the enhanced remote station and of the new IP architecture with the Cisco IP switch installed. Meanwhile, here's a bit more background on the system.

The remote station PC will run 24/7, including when nobody is at the QTH. The remote user starts by connecting to that PC using Anydesk, a free program. He will then click an onscreen button to turn on the power to the remote station and select one of our 18 transmit and two receive antennas. From there you start the client end (your remote) of the RCFORBS system, and you are on the air with a generic virtual transceiver onscreen. If you prefer, you can connect a real K3, K3/0, IC-7300 or another of several "real" transceivers at home, and you're on the air from Curacao. If you want power, you will be able to control the KPA-1500 directly from a browser window at home. When finished, you do those steps in reverse so things are ready for the next user.

Important practices. 1) We will not mention on the air that we are operating remotely. You will sign PJ2/KB7Q style callsigns, and the people we work are working a station in Curacao. If they ask how the weather is in Curacao today, it will be a safe bet to simply tell them it is hot. 2) We will limit operation of the KPA-1500 to about 800 watts, and less on digital modes. That is a very valuable piece of gear, we want

it to last, the ambient temperatures here are very high in our unattended shack, and the additional 3dB are seldom worth the wear and tear. Our trap antennas may not like 1500 watts of power, and everything is safer here if we are conservative with that amp. 3) If you do a contest via the remote, we will definitely turn in the log in the remote category when prompted.

How does it work? The heart of the system is 19 homebrew "intercept" relays that are installed just inside the house where the coaxes enter. Each box contains a 5 KW SPDT relay from DX Engineering. Normally, those boxes pass the RF right on through to the legacy PJ2T stations. But when the remote user clicks on an onscreen antenna button +12 VDC keys that relay, and that antenna is grabbed away from the normal station and connected to the remote station. Below is one of those relay boxes before I installed the kickback diode and a bypass cap at the relay. We ran the entire CQWW SSB contest through these boxes with no problems, a good smoke test.



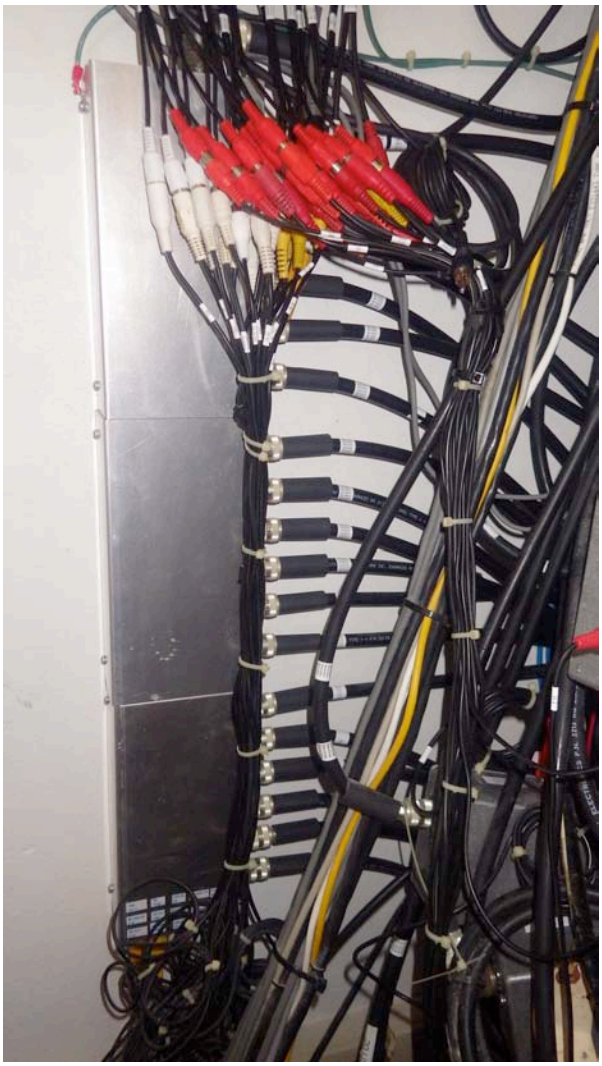
Representative intercept relay box in Ohio, not quite complete at the time of the photo

Following is one of the 19 identical intercept boxes as installed, this one for the 30 meter vee.

30 meter vee intercept box

The antenna connection is at the right, coax to the normal PJ2T stations at the left, coax to the remote station comes out at the top, and a red RCA plug for the keyed DC connects at the bottom.

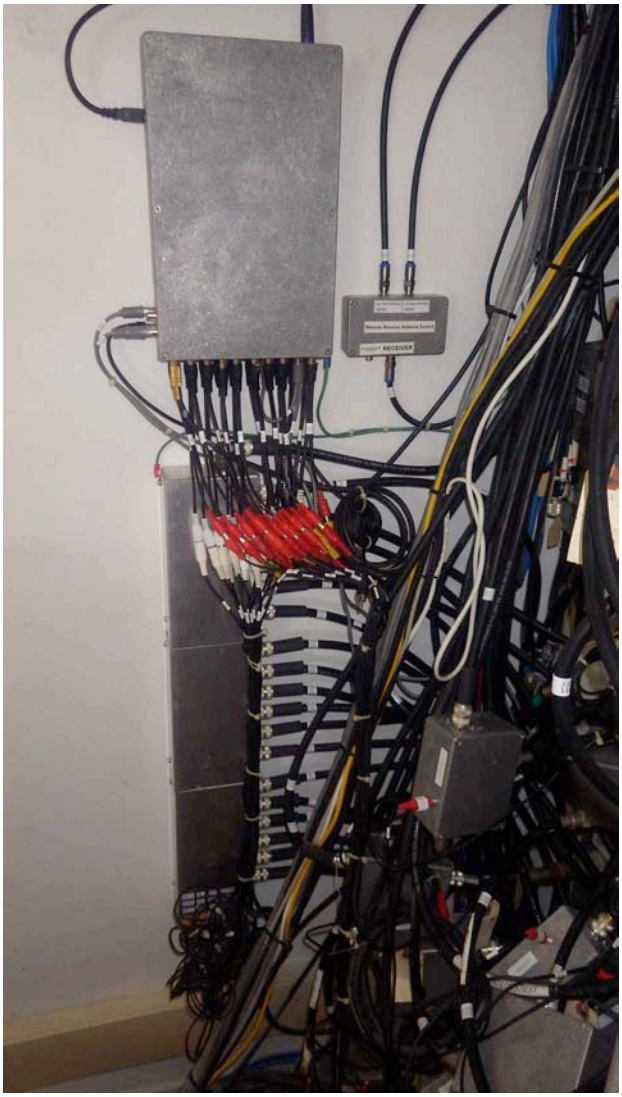
That antenna, say the 30 vee, which has now been intercepted for the use of the remote station, then goes to a homebrew 1x18 high power coax switch (photo below), which selects the 30 vee port and sends the RF to the KPA-1500 and K3 at the remote station.



1x18 homebrew remote station coax switch

This tall homebrew switch is mounted on the wall behind Station 1. The 18 intercept coaxes from the antennas enter at the right. Output to the remote station comes out the top, and the 18 DC control voltages enter at the bottom. The ground connection is at the top left.

Where do the DC control voltages come from? The next photo shows the USB controlled relay box above the 1x18. It's the non-descript looking grey box with lots of black phono connectors coming out the bottom.



USB relay box at the top, 1x18 coax switch below

Inside are two inexpensive USB controlled relay boards, one with 16 relays, the other with 8, and you see their USB cables entering at the top. 12 VDC enters the box at the bottom, and all the control signals also exit at the bottom. The cables with the white RCA plugs key relays in the 1x18 coax switch, and the red ones go to each of the 19 antenna intercept boxes. The grey plugs at the bottom left control the W9NJY ridge antenna selector box (later).

The remote user can select either our US Beverage or our Europe Beverage for low band RX (next column).

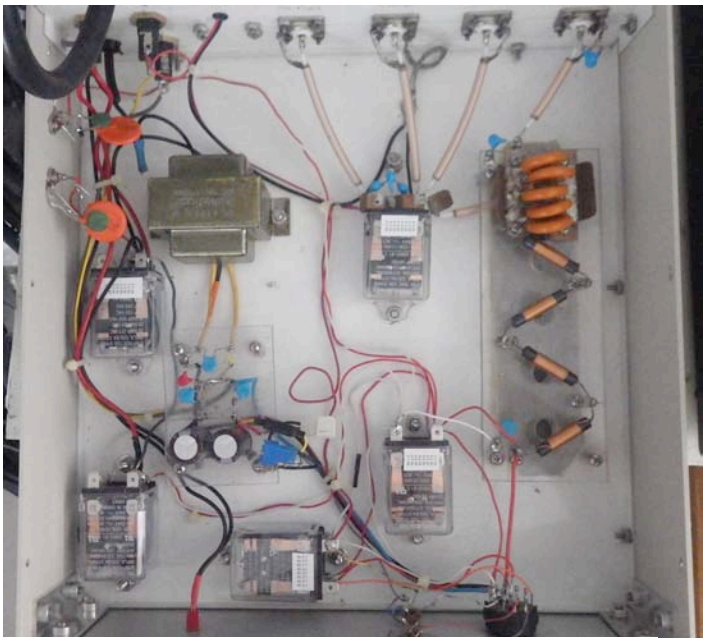
N7IR remotely-controlled RX antenna selection box

Gary built this box from my simple spec, and also fabricated two additional Magic Tee splitter boxes (below) so that we could pick off RX signals for the remote station.

N7IR RX splitter boxes for the remote station

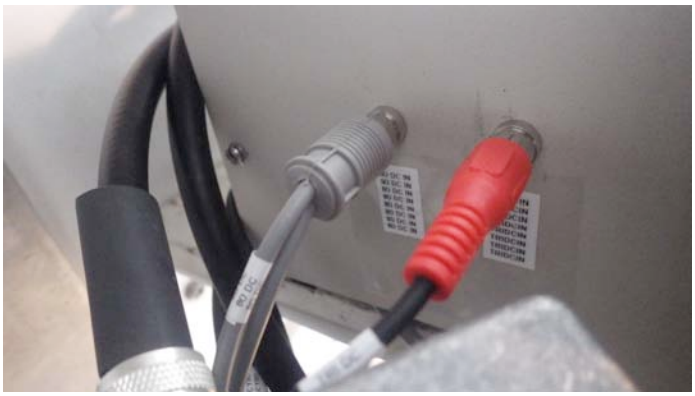
We all know from visits to PJ2T that use of the Ridge antennas (tribander and 80 vee) require that we power up and operate the selection switch on the W9NJY box. The new remote station does that for us. When the remote user wants the Ridge tribander, he clicks one button to select that antenna and a second button that causes the NJY box to power up, select the tribander,

and turn on the triplexer fans. The red LED light on the box indicates that antenna selection. If the remote user wants the 80 vee, that requires two different clicks, and the NJY box selects the 80 vee, lights the correct LED light, and does not power up the triplexer fans. This capability was attained by modifying the NJY box fairly extensively, adding four DPDT relays and inputs for two DC control signals from the USB box, photo below.



NJY box as modified for remote control

The DC control inputs enter the box are at the top left in the photo, and are shown outside the case in the photo below.



DC control inputs to the NJY Ridge selection box

(If you're really observant, you will notice that the coax in the photo has a heat shrink sleeve, but that it has not been shrunk. We don't have a decent heat gun here, but these sleeves are all ready when we do get one on site.) We'll try to not burn off the cable labels.

The remote station is located, as you have seen previously, high on the wall above Station 1 (photo). This was done because 1) space in the house is very, very scarce, 2) this keeps the remote station totally separate from the rest of normal PJ2T operation, and 3) keeps the curious from fooling around with the remote equipment. One needs a stepstool to even be able to reach the mouse and keybaord, a design feature.

PJ2T's enhanced remote station

The top shelf carries the KPA-1500, Astron DC supply, the RCFORBS server computer, several fans, and the server monitor. We can easily see that monitor from anywhere in the shack and see what's happening on the remote. Second shelf is for the K3, its supplementary fans, and the keyboard/mouse surface. The small bottom shelf is for the KPA-1500 power supply. If you look carefully you'll see that in place of the amp and supply we have some heavy paver tiles and a couple of bags of sugar in place of the equipment. These test loads exceed the weight of the Elecraft equipment. The shelves and brackets and masonry anchors are very over-engineered, but we wanted to be sure before putting almost $7K of equipment up there. Here's another view (next page).

End view of the test loads. Notice the heavy duty ground cables in place awaiting arrival of the amplifier. The 220 VAC service is not quite in view on the power supply shelf.

A final detail: the Astron DC supply and the PC are mounted on homebrew aluminum frames (photo next column), like erector sets, to get them off the shelf and allow full air circulation on all sides from the muffin fans. It will be hot in the house when nobody is here and we are using the remote station.

Cooling rack for the DC supply

CCC member DL8OBQ says he will probably be able to write a custom program to control the antenna selection relays. We are presently using clunky freeware from the Internet. Uli's solution will be classier and easier to use. Uli has those programing specifications in hand and already has done some prototyping of that software. Also, we have a new high resolution remote station IP camera in service that will enable you to see the remote station and make a note if it falls off the wall or erupts in flames. Access info for that Foscam will be available soon.

Meanwhile, please get on and use this super new capability. There will be someone at the QTH almost continuously until the middle of April, so we will have plenty of time to find the kinks and work out the weak spots.

AB8YK Presents in Kent, Ohio

October 10, AB8YK at PCARS . Ohio

While working at the Ohio house Monday morning, October 10, I got a message from ND8L that our local radio club meeting would be that night, and that the program was a report by Jim Storms (AB8YK) on the July Youth DX Adventure at PJ2T. Don Dubon,

N6JRL, cofounder of YDXA was also to be in attendance. I went to the meeting and enjoyed chatting with CCCers W8PT and K8IV, and cheered on Jim as he did a super presentation. He also managed to get the three young ops on Zoom, and they each gave a brief statement and took questions from the floor.

Jim had driven all the way to Kent from Dayton to do this, and had to go back later that night, a long solitary drive in the dark. This is representative of the extreme effort he invests to try to keep the youth program funded year to year. All of this on top of his work as General Chairman of the Dayton Hamvention, 2023.

Welcome W3ACO to CCC Membership

Please welcome Rich Haendel, W3ACO, to CCC membership, pictured below with his daughter Melissa, W7MAH.

W7MAH and W3ACO

Rich opted to join the group on October 28 after CQWW SSB. He does not characterize himself as a power contester, but is very interested in the group's activity, has now visited three times, and wants to help support the organization. Rich is a retired senior executive and engineer from Rockwell-Collins, and still lives in Eastern Iowa. On the side, he is an accomplished gourmet chef, and has feted our contest teams before with fabulous meals.

Prior to the contest I put out a plea for some Amphenol ells and double male connectors, as I had used most of our stock installing the remoting hardware. Rich dropped what he was doing at home, drove to his Iowa shop, and very kindly brought a bulging bag of vintage high quality adapters and connectors to the island. He is that kind of guy, and we are better as an organization having him in the group.

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. As I write this on November 10 the construction is at a full stop, and nothing whatsoever is moving. The heavy equipment is in the contractor's compound, but is presently silent.

Thanks for Coax Adapters

As noted earlier, I made a plea to the CQWW SSB team for coax adapters, and in addition to the contribution from W3ACO, we received adapters from KL2A and N4RV. Thanks guys!

CQWW SSB Contest Report

We got out of the gate fast! Here are the 18 contacts logged in the first minute. Operators were N6GQ on 20, NN3W 40, W4IPC on 15, and N4RV on 10. KL2A was at 80 meters, but that band took a while to light up.

QSO: 21308 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	N5KO	59 03
QSO: 7093 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	EW5A	59 16
QSO: 21308 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	N5XX	59 04
QSO: 14226 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	N8WCP	59 04
QSO: 7093 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	DM3W	59 14
QSO: 21308 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	K5DXR	59 04
QSO: 14226 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	K3EST	59 03
QSO: 7093 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	VE3EJ	59 04
QSO: 21308 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	N9TGR	59 04
QSO: 14226 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	KF5VDX	59 04
QSO: 7093 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	OR2M	59 14
QSO: 21308 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	K9KE	59 04
QSO: 7093 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	LP1H	59 13
QSO: 14226 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	WA6PPX	59 03
QSO: 21308 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	W7IUO	59 03
QSO: 28416 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	PT2SXR	59 11
QSO: 7093 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	W1QK	59 05
QSO: 14226 PH 2022-10-29 0000 PJ2T	59 9	W9AEB	59 04

I had warned the team that we positively could not win if there were M/M operations in Zone 33. Some of them poo-pooed my negative attitude, but unfortunately I was precisely correct. And our claimed score is World #3 behind two, you guessed it, Zone 33 teams. I told the team all along that my goal was to be #1 in our side of the world, and we apparently did achieve that with tis outcome.

Band	QSOs	Zones	Countries
160:	232	15	30
80:	994	23	86
40:	2750	30	121
20:	3566	38	132
15:	4071	34	117
10:	4521	34	123
Total:	16134	174	609

Total Score 36,959,949

Dorothy and I arrived at the QTH on October 12 with Uli following two days later. He and I pitched in and got the place set up for WW, no small feat after the deep mothballing over the summer.

Only three CCC members (DL8OBQ, ND8L, VE4GV) expressed interest in this trip, but we were fortunate to be able to recruit many top ops for this contest. Rich, NN3W, is a WRTC team leader and was here last year. We were also very lucky to be able to recruit another WRTC team leader, Connor Black, W4IPC, who at age 20 definitely pulled down our team's median age. The team pitched in to cover Connor's travel and on-site costs, as he is a starving engineering student at Old Dominion University. Long time CCC member N4RV made a return after a few years away, and it was a thrill to have Jack on site.

It was special fun to get W7MAH in a contest chair. Melissa (W3ACO's daughter) was our chef this week, but she very recently earned her General ticket, and had never contested. With help from her dad she ran some contest QSOs, getting her first sample of contesting on a busy 10 meter band (photo). It is fun to see W7MAH in the operator list.

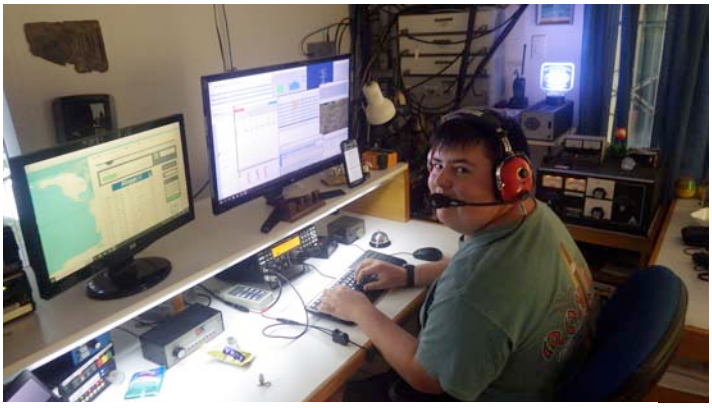
W7MAH in her first contest experience, 10 meters

Conditions were good, but down a bit from the Worked All Germany contest two weeks prior. 10 meters produced for the first three night hours (lots of 1-point PY and LU QSOs), and we lost next to nothing by not having that station on 160 during that time. The morning Europe opening came early, as expected, followed soon after by a raging 10 meter Europe opening that went on seemingly endlessly for hours. 15 was superb with openings all over the globe, and the only disappointment was 20. The band was open, but with such good conditions on 10 and 15, activity was very low. I went almost 90 minutes on 20 Sunday at around 1600Z with nothing but a couple of dupes, and no multipliers to pounce. The exception to the 20 doldrums was in the Europe only band where Uli cleverly worked a ton of multipliers around 14.130.

We continued long PJ2T traditions, including the Friday pizza at Sol Food, next page.

Sol Food, L-R: Rob (VE4GV), Jeff (N6GQ), Julia (N6GQ XYL), Melissa (W7MAH), Uli (DL8OBQ), Jack (N4RV), Rich (W3ACO), Dorothy, Connor (W4IPC), Ray (ND8L). NN3W and KL2A stayed at the QTH to sleep.

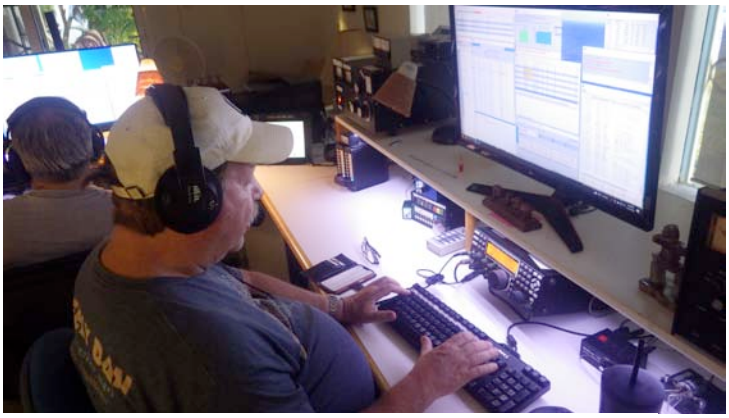
Here's a photo collection.



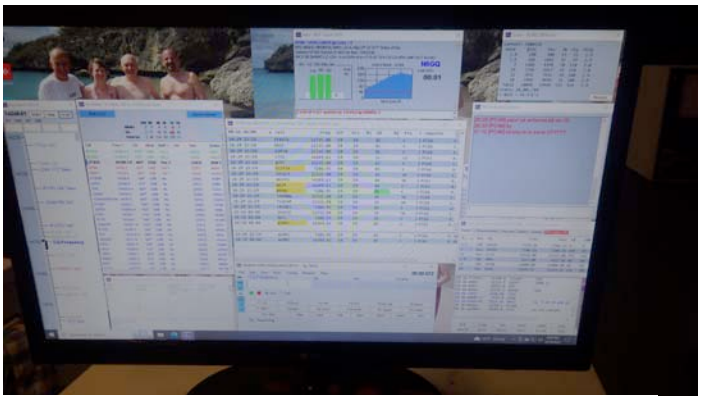
Connor Black, W4IPC, who did a 355 hour Saturday on 10

W7MAH listening to her dad mine LUs and PYs on 10

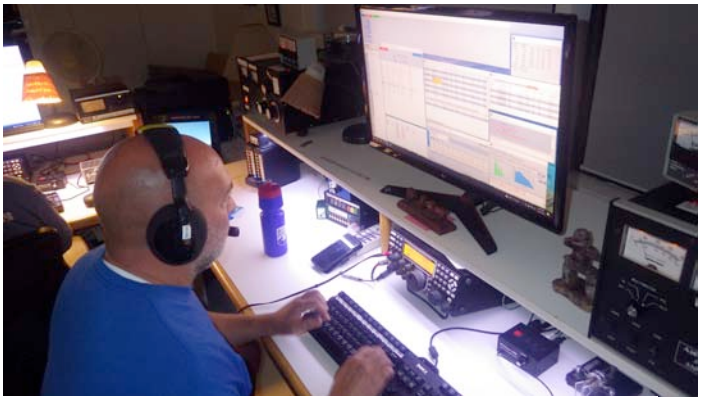
DL8OBQ scoring lots of Europeans on 20 at the N0YY-designed fold-up Station 5 position



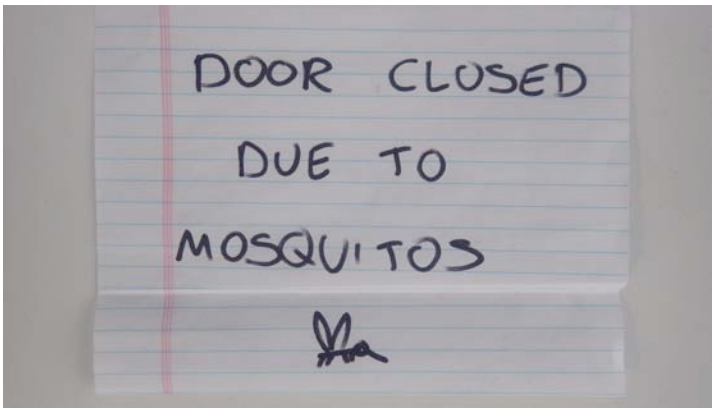
VE4GV on a very, very busy 15 meters



Contest halfway complete and 10098 QSOs in the log!

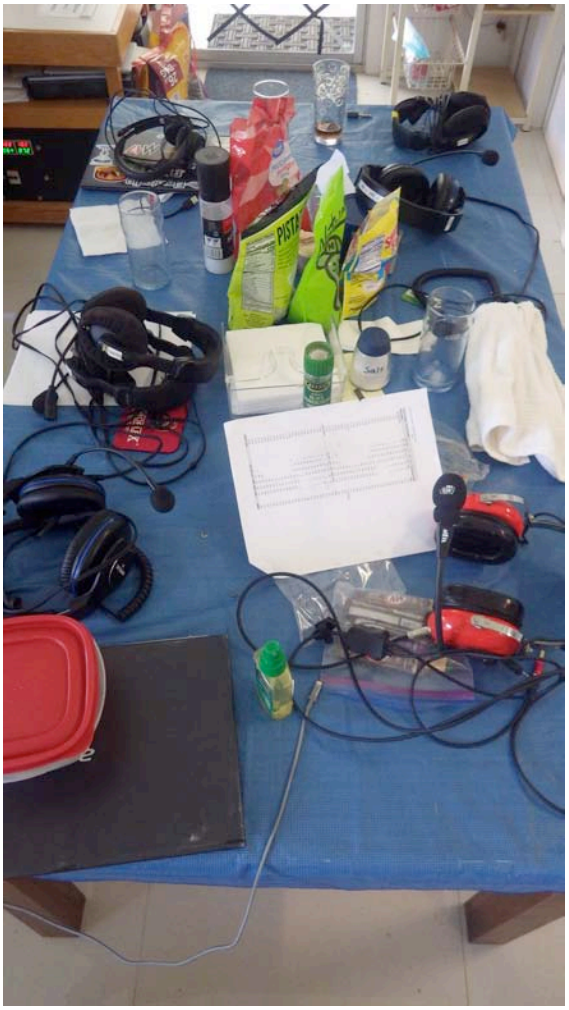


Globetrotting Jon (KL2A). Look fast, because tomorrow he may be in some other country. Jon lives, of all places, in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho!

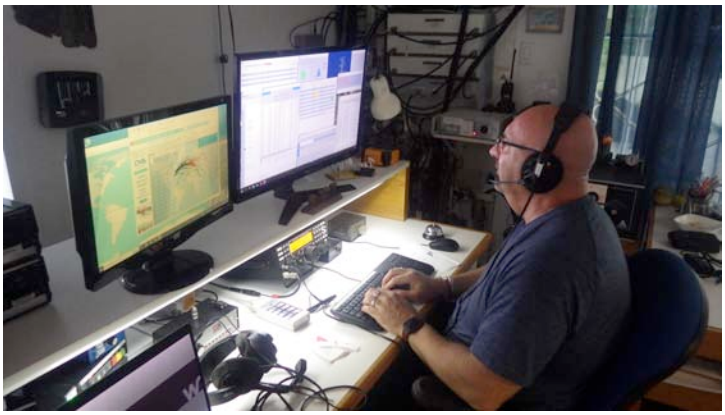


Spelling is not important when we use the International Graphic Symbol for mosquitoes

ND8L grabbing some late afternoon action as Europe opens on 40



Signal Point's parking lot for headsets and snacks during the contest



N6GQ ("Jeff with a J") making very high rates on 10

0001Z Monday: DL8OBQ, W4IPC, KL2A, NN3W, ND8L, N4RV.

This is the first time I can remember that the entire team did not show up at the ending bell.

I learned a lesson about team management from this one. One of our team members dropped out at the last minute when he tested positive for COVID and was held in quarantine in Taiwan for seven days. That required hurried adjustment to the carefully crafted operating schedule. I made the mistake of turning this task over to the team to negotiate as a group.

Instead of a negotiation, as I had intended, one of the team members, a very strong personality, took over the task himself and re-did the operator schedule, earning almost everyone's ire and leading to some harsh words during the contest. The wounds healed by the end of the weekend, but this sort of behavior is a marked exception at Signal Point. Also, my frustration ran high all week as I explained and re-explained and then again re-re-explained basic principles of our station to people, and still saw some carelessness with our equipment and quite a few bonehead mistakes. On top of this, it is almost two weeks after the contest and I am still chasing two of the ops to square up their accounts so I can be reimbursed for the rental house, groceries, and many other expenses. Thus, I look forward to the CW team's arrival with great delight, because I know that these sorts of problems will be completely absent with these guys.

On the plus side, the hardware and software were perfect all weekend. No glitches or problems, and all six computers came out perfectly synched with 16,134 QSOs. That's a big number, and huge visibility for PJ2T. Thanks you for your support in making this happen.

For more about the contest, see the 3830 comments at https://www.3830scores.com/showrumor.php?arg=o9aDzNvqiigfb

CQWW CW Contest Team

Our CW team is arrives in eight days! W0CG, K5PI, K9DR, VE3CX, VE3JM+XYL, VE3EY+XYL, W9NJY, N7IR, NA2U, and KY7M. We'll do our best to make you proud. Everything depends on the commercial power staying on.

Impromptu German Visitors

As so often happens at Signal Point, a group of tourist hams wandered into the QTH on October 19. We were in the midst of various projects but dropped those for the moment and hopefully made our German visitors feel welcome.

L-R: Frank (DL6JFR), Achim (DM3HZN), Dorothy, Frank's XYL and son, and of course Uli (DL8OBQ).

Achim had been here twice before, many years ago. They were not interested in running any pileups, and we had a fun visit with them in the cooling breezes outside.

A New Championship Ridger

W3ACO has visited Signal Point twice before, known for his fantastic skills as a chef. Rich returned for CQWW 2022 and brought along his daughter, Melissa Haendel, W7MAH. She's 53, a post-doc trained medical data scientist with vast scientific credentials and experience worldwide chasing down COVID patterns and saving many lives along the way.

Melissa is also a hiker and avid birder, and when she overheard me discussing a need to go pull maintenance on the Ridge Beverages, she gamely volunteered to help. She was a fantastic help, and we spent a couple of hours on October 27 in incredibly intense heat and humidity with zero wind and long sleeves and long pants, constituting pretty much the most difficult conditions ever. We cleared vines and vegetation from the Europe Beverage, and inspected the full 1000 foot length, including checking out the feedpoint cabling.

Melissa hardly got out of breath, barely broke a sweat, did not flinch in the least at the climb up and down the rocks, and carried tools, clearing vegetation all along the route. Wow. In my 22 years of working up there, she is the most physically fit, cardio-healthy, strong, agile, and flexible person I've ever worked with. Additionally, she is making meals for the crews that would earn Michelin stars.

Here she is, the first person ever to join me at the far end of the now extended Europe Beverage. Sorry guys, she's happily married – you're out of luck.

W7MAH (Melissa) at the new termination of the Europe Beverage, October 26, 2022.

W7MAH with the blue Beverage wire

Worked All Germany Contest Report

DL8OBQ showed up on the island on schedule on October 14, and the next day he sat down to tackle the 24 hour WAG contest, signing PJ2T. Just like last year, this was the first outing of the season for PJ2T, and he achieved a super score. His SO HP SSB entry is presently #2 in the category on 3830. He chose not to do an industrial effort, operating 14 of the 24 hours.

While he operated Saturday I spent a few hours in the backyard repairing the 80 3 el Europe and US 2 el 80 antennas, tuning the 3 el for SSB and getting it on the air for the first time in a couple of years. He made good use of that 3 el antenna, harvesting all possible low band mults Saturday night.

Congrats Uli on his best ever WAG effort from PJ2.

80:	0	34	18
40:	0	114	25
20:	0	231	26
15:	0	318	26
10:	0	553	26
Total:	0	1250	121

Total Score 433,785

Two 80 Meter Antennas Repaired

We arrived on October 12 to find lots of rope and wires hanging freely in the backyard and blowing in the wind. The windstorms in September had broken ropes on the 80 US 2-element, and there were multiple breaks in wires in two of the elements of the 80 Eur 3 el. I spent two afternoons in the yard with the soldering iron and lots of patch rope and wire and got everything fixed and working. Uli subsequently used the Eur 3 el in the Worked All Germany contest, and he reported that it played better than the Ridge 80.

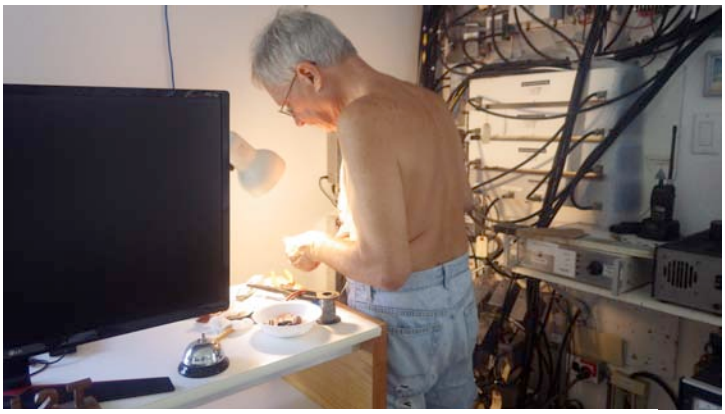
End of Month Balance

At the end of October the balance in the Station Support fund was $6495.83.

Thanks K8IV

In the photo on the next page, from Friday, October 21, Geoff is making the first couple of 38 RG-213 connection cables for the remote. CCC member Ed, K8IV, donated this PL-259 crimp tool three years ago, and it got very heavy use this trip. I had initially shied away from the crimp connectors, but N7IR and W8WTS and KB7Q showed me the error of my ways, and they were totally correct. The crimp connectors are fabulous, and over the 22nd and 23rd I put on 78 of them. Thanks again to WX4W, N7IR, N7WA and W0CG who pitched in cash for Gary's "side" fundraiser to buy three bags of these connectors, 72 in total, from DX Engineering. They are now part of the enhanced remote station.

We didn't have the snazzy cable stripping tool, but I got really proficient really fast at the hand method, and spent most of two days standing at this workstation (below) all day both days, making up custom length cables and crimping on the PL-259s. Thanks again K8IV for this fabulous tool!



W0CG making a seemingly endless collection of 38 custom coax jumper cables.

W9VA and W9NJY

Andy ventured down to Chicagoland a couple of weeks ago to pay a visit to W9VA (photo next column). He has an Alfa Romeo 4C with vocal mufflers tuned for racing, and Andy said he drew some stares from neighbors as they cruised around Riverwoods.

W9VA and W9NJY with Andy's 4C

UK/EI Contest Result

For two weeks prior to the WW contest I had been urging Uli to operate in order to wring out the contest stations, looking for problems. He took me at my word and decided to make an effort in the UK/EI SSB contest the weekend prior to WW and won the contest with the high DX-side score!

Pretty nice outcome for what was just to be a "test" of the PJ2T infrastructure prior to the WW contest. We did find and fix a few minor problems as a result, mostly with 80 meter antennas and a Beverage, and the win is a wonderful side-surprise.

Summary:

Band	QSOs	DXCC	Districts		
80:	19	11	1		
40:	186	35	24		
20:	275	36	36		
15:	536	41	44		
10:	159	27	29		
Total:	1186	150	134	Total Score	587,928

Installation Process for Remote

As you saw from the front page story, this project is done. Here's some interim reporting from along that road to completion.

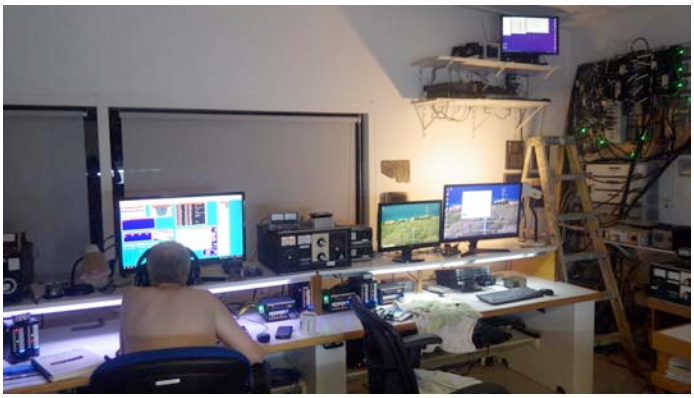
The project began when Dorothy and I worked together for several hot hours on October 14 and installed the shelves for the new station (photo next page).

The photo shows me in a precarious position standing partly on a ladder and partly on the Station 1 trestle installing masonry anchors in the concrete wall. This is an awkward spot and really hot and athletic work.

As things progressed the next day the shelves and outlet strips were finally up, and Dorothy's on the ladder (photo below) filling some old holes where there had been contest plaques on the wall.

Dorothy filling holes in the concrete

Here's a photo (next column) from Saturday. Uli is running the Worked All Germany contest, and most of the components (not the amp) of the remote station are in place on the shelves. It's intentionally placed quite high to keep it out of the way of routine maintenance on the stations, and to dissuade people from playing with it. Getting to the remote station mouse and keyboard requires a stepstool, a designed feature.



PJ2T enhanced remote station on the wall

A couple of days later, and I'm installing the USB relay box and 1 x 18 coax switch on the wall below the shelves as Dorothy helps out.

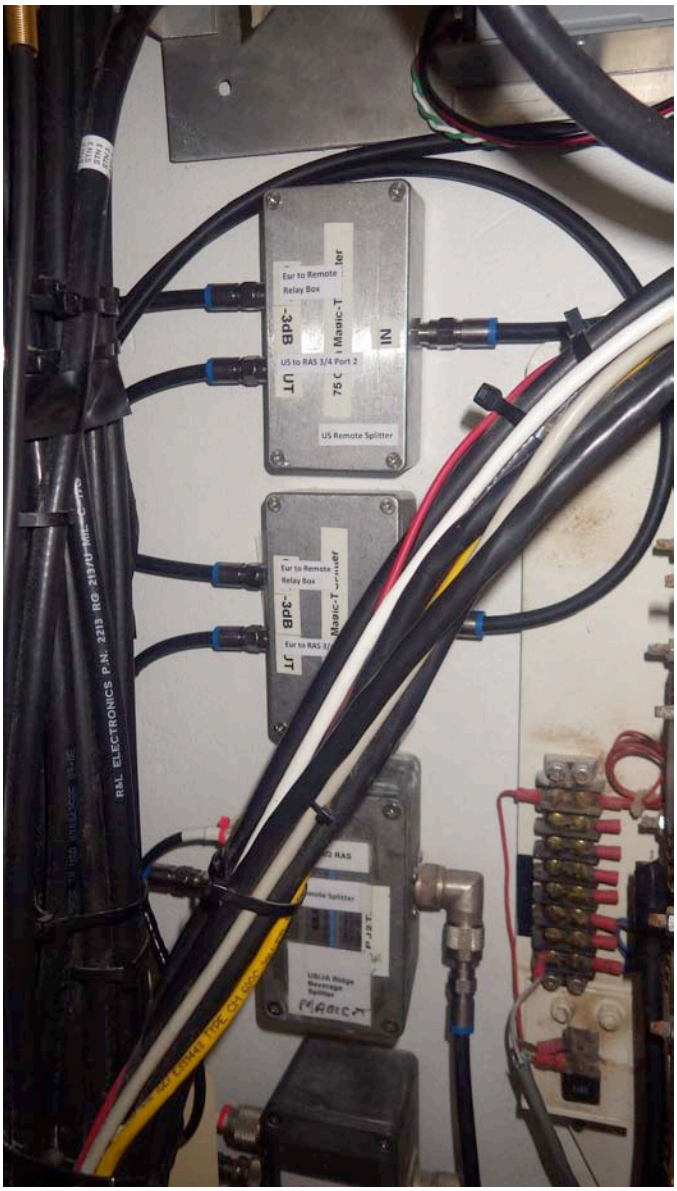
Drilling mounting holes in the concrete for the 1 x 18 box

There were numerous glitches along the way, such as the 8x relay board refusing to communicate with its COM port, and the power control switch deciding on its own to change its LAN credentials, but eventually everything settled down and we got it working. KB7Q has been present in Bozeman all along this process, helping and advising and testing. Early in the installation process Gene was able to Anydesk to the remote PC and manipulate the antenna selection relays in the shack. Exciting stuff to finally see that happen.

On October 18/19 I installed the remote RX antenna selection components built by N7IR. Here's one of the Magic-T splitters Gary built (next page), just before I buttoned up the lid.

An N7IR RX splitter with its hood up

It took me much of the day on the 18th to make up the needed RG-6 jumper cables and set up all the necessary adapters. Here's a shot (next column) of the completed splitter boxes, tested and working, and with some labels I added to make my troubleshooting simpler when that day comes. All of this is wedged tightly in the corner left of the triplexer panel and below the legacy antenna switching system.



The "splitter wall" with remote components added

After putting it all together Stations 3 and 4 were not receiving the RX signal from the new splitter system, so I slept on that and did the troubleshooting on the 19th. Extremely frustrating. I finally discovered that the Beverage cabling at Stations 3/4 was in error in several places, and some cables were mislabeled. After cleaning all that up, fixing labels, and putting the right cables on the right ports, everything worked fine.

The next component of the remote project at that point was to install additional relays in the W9NJY remote coax switch box and rewire parts of that to effect remote control of Ridge antenna selection. We're very busy prepping a five-station setup for CQWW SSB, so that will soon take priority.

Ridge Pain

DL8OBQ generously volunteered to go to the Ridge and retune the 80 vee for SSB. This turned out to be quite a chore because our old route to the Ridge is now gone because of the extensive dirt work up there. The secondary route, driving to the approach area on the upper road, is also unavailable because the hotel has put a locked chain across that road. Thus, Uli had to drive almost all the way to the hotel, park, walk up the new road dirt slope, then walk all the way back to the QTH on the upper road before he could even begin to access the path to our Ridge antennas.

After that long trip he did finally call on 2 meters, we checked the SWR for SSB (good), and he made his way back down. The heat and humidity were utterly extreme, and he drew a lot of blood in the stickers, as seen below.

Uli, Friday, October 21, not quite dead

Lots of blood was lost on the Ridge trip

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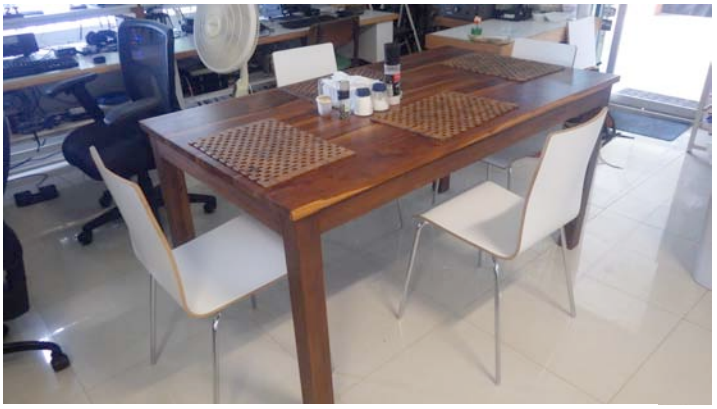
New Dell Monitor Bought October 31

We finally ran out of good monitors. I contacted the CCC officers and got their authorization to buy a new monitor locally. The result of that shopping trip was a Dell P2422H 23.8 " monitor with VGA, HDMI, and DP ports. I got it at a store called Better Deals, total tab $457.11. Hopefully this beautiful new monitor will serve us for years to come.

New Chairs for the Shack Room

Last year we bought a beautiful new solid teak dining table to replace the failing PJ9JT table, which had a broken leg and a delaminating top. Then we started looking for a set of hefty solid teak chairs to match. After almost a year of visiting one furniture store after another we gave up and went in a different direction. The photo shows four beautiful white chairs that we got on November 11 at a surplus store on the island. These are much better quality than they appear in the photo.



Four new white dining chairs at PJ2T

These are commercial grade, and they had a prior life probably in a restaurant. The store told us they were recently brought here from the Netherlands for resale. We picked over the pile and selected the four that were in best condition. They are very comfortable, match the décor on the new kitchen and the N0YY operating desks, and will not damage the floor. All hail Dorothy for pressing me to navigate to Frank's Spullen on the far side of the island and find these perfect chairs. The John Thompson chairs will now be retired, in very poor and somewhat dangerous condition, after over 50 years of use here.

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