



Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium
Editor: W0CG

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Curacao COVID Testing Dropped Entirely

Effective March 10 all COVID test requirements for entry to Curacao have been dropped. Mask requirements are also dropped except in hospitals and on tour busses and taxis.

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

CCC Annual Meeting at Dayton Hamvention

Stand by for news on this. Coordination and assignment of meeting rooms at the Hope Hotel is running a bit later than usual, and we are waiting to hear from K3LR's right hand woman Terri about a room. The meeting will be on Friday afternoon, probably at 3 PM, but don't lock that in yet. Thanks W8WTS for coordinating.

ARRL DX CW Contest Report

Claimed scores on 3830 are encouraging, and it's likely we have a World #1 win in Multi/Multi. The added fun dividend is that we made more QSOs (9888) from the Signal Point shack than any other station in the world. PJ2T rocks!

Band	QSOs	Pts	Sec	Pt/Q
1.8	674	2022	53	3.0
3.5	1127	3381	60	3.0
7	1988	5940	60	3.0
14	2049	6147	60	3.0
21	2122	6366	60	3.0
28	1928	5784	58	3.0
Total	9888	29640	351	3.0

Score: 10,403,640
1 Mult = 28.2 Q's

Score summary from N1MM.

We're proud of this result because we did it with only five operators plus some time from me. We had some

challenges. Thursday before the contest there was a scheduled power outage, but instead of the planned six hours it was 14. We ran the generator for much of that time to support fun operating.



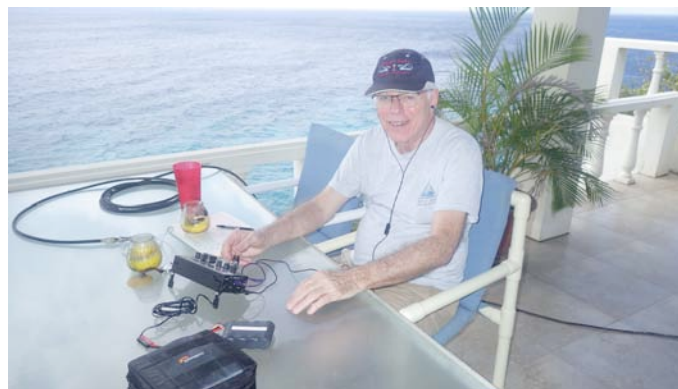
PJ2T's Coleman camping generator – crude, but it makes 5 KW reliably.

The power outage did compromise our contest preparation, and we were not able to do the 8 PM Thursday contest mock-up start. As a result, we found a couple of surprises right at the beginning of the contest that required some quick fixing, particularly at the 40 meter station. But soon things settled down, and we fell into a smooth rhythm. N7IR and W9NJY volunteered to do 160 and 80 both nights all night, respectively, and all others showed up promptly and professionally for their shifts all weekend.

One shocker was that team member W1MD E-mailed us on Friday morning that he had to cancel because of work problems, only six hours before we were to go pick him up at the airport. This extremely unwelcome development required a quick rework of the carefully crafted operating schedule, but everyone stepped up, even me, and we covered the hours well. Running a four station multi/multi, we left very little on the table. A fifth station might have helped us get the 122 additional QSOs we needed to get to 10,000, but we had no operators to run it anyway.

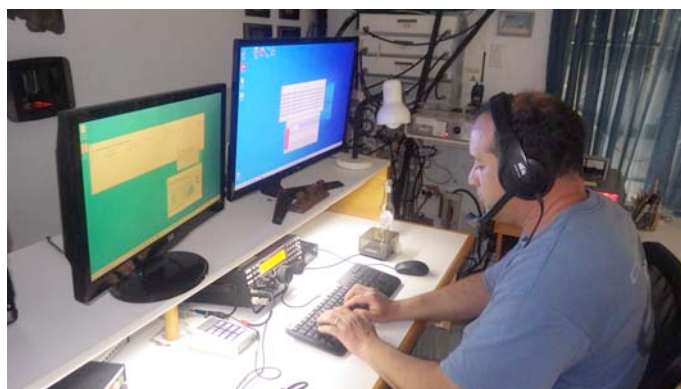
Conditions were good, but not great, as the SFI hovered around only 96 and the pileups were thinner than we normally see. 10 meters did come through, but 20 was shaky at times and 15 was, as usual, the big money band. All the gear worked fine through the weekend, all antennas performed flawlessly including the repaired US Beverage, and the HF-2500 amplifier supported us beautifully on 160 and 15. It ran cool and easy at about a KW all weekend.

There was very little setup or troubleshooting or project work to do prior to the contest, so the ops enjoyed lots of contacts for fun, and lots of time around the pool.



Commercial power out? No problem for W9NJY.

While Andy operated on battery power, here's Bill at Station 1, supported by the generator running FT4 on 15 inside. We went through 3.5 gallons of fuel in the generator on Thursday.



Rudy, NF9V enjoying pileups on 15 Wednesday at Station 1, fueled by Amstel Bright.



W9VA doing FT4 on generator power, 15 meters.

TS	call	Freq	Mode	Sig	RCV	PFX	Name	Comment	Com
2022-02-16 23151	3K2MN	21032.62	CW	599	599	JA			PC49
2022-02-16 23152	J41DHT	21032.62	CW	599	599	JA			PC49
2022-02-16 23153	2E202T	21032.62	CW	599	599	JA			PC49
2022-02-16 23153	W66TVP	21032.62	CW	599	599	K			PC49
2022-02-16 23153	1X6U	21032.62	CW	599	599	1X66			PC49
2022-02-16 23154	J41JPM	21032.62	CW	599	599	JA			PC49
2022-02-16 23154	1M4LHF	21032.62	CW	599	599	1M49			PC49
2022-02-16 23155	J20USR	21032.62	CW	599	599	JA			PC49
2022-02-16 23155	218FT	21032.62	CW	599	599	JA			PC49
2022-02-16 23157	168X	21032.62	CW	599	599	K			PC49
2022-02-16 23158	19E30D	21032.62	CW	599	599	1V			PC49
2022-02-16 23159	J40GZ2	21032.62	CW	599	599	JA			PC49
2022-02-17 00100	2E1NDL	21032.62	CW	599	599	JA			PC49

Rudy found a nearly endless seam of JAs near dusk on Wednesday.

W9NJY brought his KX3 and thumbed his nose at the power outage on Thursday, running QSOs for hours from the outside table, connected via the buried coax under the pavilion floor.

The power dropped off again for about an hour Friday morning, but after that all was well. Here's the crew on Friday morning, all heads down making appointments for the rapid antigen tests the following Monday. For \$35 per person the lab would come to the house (!) and take samples on site. That all worked, and the technician showed up on time at Signal Point, swabbed six people, and was gone by 9:30. The results, all negative, came in promptly within a couple of hours. Here (next page) is NF9V doing his paperwork for the test.



NF9V with the COVID technician at Signal Point Monday morning, February 21.

After signing up for those COVID tests we headed to Sunshine's Friday at noon for traditional pizza festival, all eating too much (below).



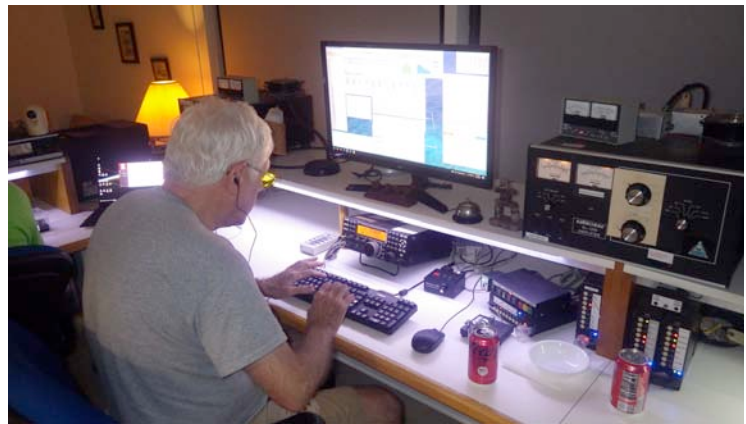
Sol Food, Westpunt, seven hours before the contest.

The contest kickoff was a little bit rocky. In the first minute or so Rudy was yelling that he had lost CW keyboard sending capability. I could not see the problem immediately, so I took 160 while N7IR rendered a second opinion. Gary told me to replace the keyboard, but that did not do the job. Somehow the problem seemed to correct itself, and after about 10 minutes Rudy settled into a rhythm. Many hours later when I was operating 40 I discovered that some of the function key definitions were only labels, not followed by the comma to the key definition itself. I fixed that, but hours later Gary discovered that the serial cable from the radio was not plugged into the PC. Dumb Geoff, I disconnected it by accident when rushing to try to replace the keyboard in the dark under Rudy's knees. After that was fixed all was fine for the rest of the contest. This is the kind of thing that our practice mockup Thursday night and no operating on Friday would have prevented.

The second hour was the best rate hour of the contest with 500 QSOs logged. Night conditions were pretty good. Here's the night crew plugging along in the wee hours the first night.



N7IR on 160, W9NJY running 80 and NF9V making great rates on 40 around 2 AM local Saturday. Andy and Gary ran 160 and 80 all night both nights. 80 used the Ridge inverted vee the entire contest with good result. Here below is Andy at Station 2.

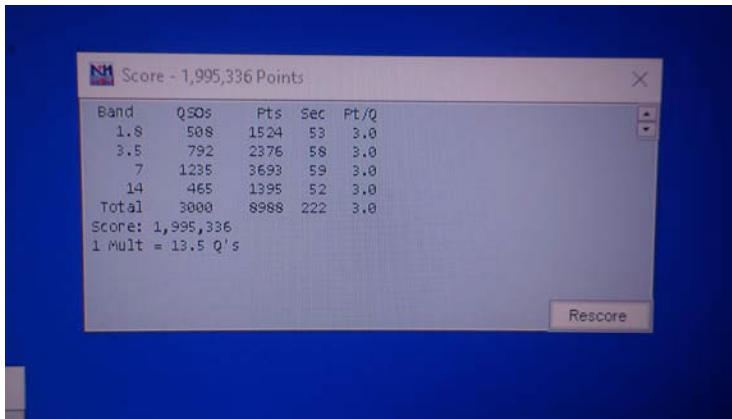


80 meters, W9NJY, Station 2

Saturday morning the ops were treated to the traditional scent of Geoff's chili.



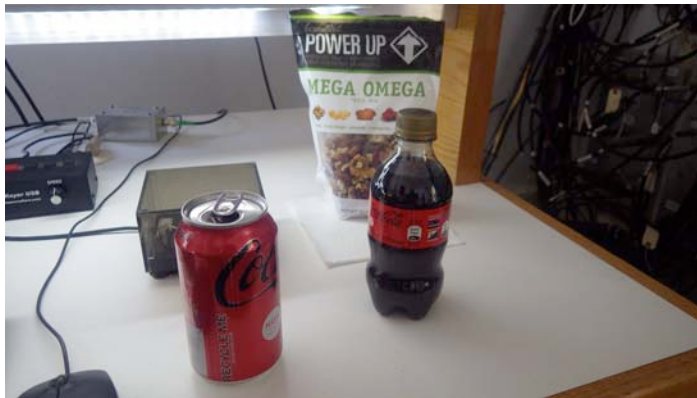
W0CG prepping the chili to go into the crock pot Saturday morning



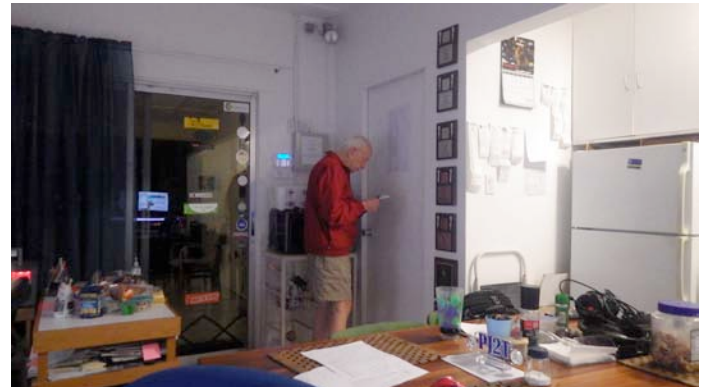
8:40 AM Saturday, former CCCer WA4PGM was QSO 3000.



W9VA running great rates on 20 on Saturday.

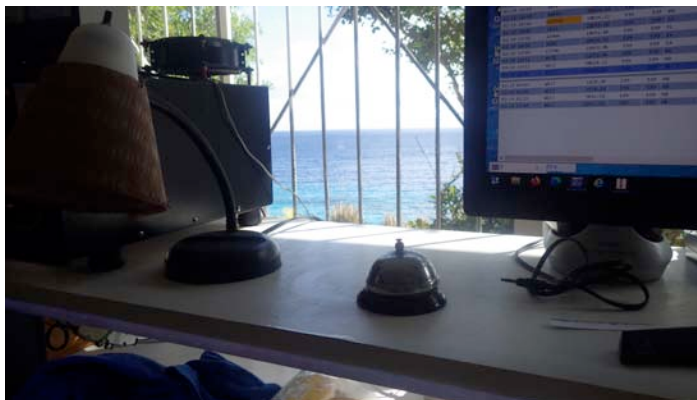


Rudy's run on 15 was powered by QRO trail mix and Diet Coke.



Bill is studying the schedule on the door at 3 AM Sunday to be sure when his next shift begins.

Here's part of the extensively modified schedule after W1MD's withdrawal. We got it done.



The view from W0CG's chair at Station 2, 10 meters, Saturday morning. A beautiful and placid seascape.

Time	Station	Station	Station	Station
0900-1000	5-6 AM	N7IR	W9WJY	NOVD
1000-1100	6-7 AM	N7IR	W9WJY	NOVD
1100-1200	7-8 AM	N7IR	W9WJY	NOVD
1300-1400	8-9 AM		W9VA	W0CG
1400-1500	9-10 AM		W9VA	NOVD
1500-1600	10-11 AM		W9VA	W0CG
1600-1700	11-Noon		NOVD	W0CG
1700-1800	Noon-1 PM		NOVD	N7IR
1800-1900	1-2 PM		NOVD	N7IR
1900-2000	2-3 PM		NOVD	N7IR
2000-2100	3-4 PM		N7IR	N7IR
2100-2200	4-5 PM		N7IR	N7IR
2200-2300	5-6 PM		N7IR	N7IR
2300-2400	6-7 PM		W9VA	W9WJY
	7-8 PM		W9VA	W9WJY

ARRL DX CW penciled-up operating schedule



A happy W9VA running daylight Qs on 40!



Fuel for W9NJY's 20 meter shift.

Thanks again to our five ops for braving COVID, working hard, and winning the world!

CQ 160 CW Win Is Confirmed

Postings of raw scores by CQ have now confirmed that Jeff and Jim won the world in the 160 CW contest at the end of February. Besides tremendous operator skill and patience, they invest great effort in setting up a leading edge receiving system with three SDRs and four antennas available feeding skimmer and operator spots to their log. They miss nothing. CONGRATULATIONS to K8ND and W8WTS.



K8ND, Dorothy, W8WTS

Here are the top raw scores in multioperator. Beating out these European superstations is a superb accomplishment.

PJ2T.....1,495,936 (W8WTS K8ND)

UA2FW.....1,363,782 (RN1B RV1AW RA2FA UA2FZ UA4FER RW4WR RG6G R7LV)

EW5A.....1,274,301 (EW1NY, EW2M, EU4A, EU4CK, EW6W)

OK7K.....1,270,560 (OK1BN OK1GK OK1NS OK3RM)

S50C.....1,249,015 (S53BB, S53CC, S53MM, S53RM, S53WW, S55OO, S57AL, S57C)

E7DX.....1,147,328 (E70T E76C E77DX E77EA)

4X2M.....1,141,465 (4X1MM 4X6HX 4Z4AK 4Z5IW 4Z5ML 4Z5LY)

UA7K.....1,123,785 (R3FA RK7A RW7K R7KW UB7K VE3LA)

UR7D.....1,091,664 (UR5YKO US2YW UT5ECZ UW8SM UZ5DU UZ5DX)

K1LZ.....1,081,470 (K1LZ NN1C W1ADI K3JO)

ARRL CW DX CONTEST – REFLECTIONS, by W9VA

We have been doing the ARRL DX Contest – CW – at Signal Point for over 20 years. I was fortunate to participate in the first effort back in 2001. Besides myself the team included Geoff (of course), Noel W9EFL, Keith WA9S, Jim WØNB (then KP2L), and Steve N8BJQ. We came in third as a Multi/Single entry with 4.8 million points, based on 4,800 contacts and 325 mults. If memory serves correctly, the rig was a donated Kenwood TS930S, which had seen better days. Sadly Noel and Keith, both founding members, are no longer with us. But the tradition begins – and PJ2T has been a force to reckon with in each of the succeeding contests. Here's that team photo (next page), February, 2001.



ARRL DX CW Team, February, 2001. Kneeling W0CG, WA9S (SK), author W9VA; Standing W0NB/KP2L, N8BJQ, W9EFL (SK)

A word about 2020 – celebrating 20 years of continuous contest operation from PJ2T. Everything about 2020 was normal – we had a full team of 8 operators plus tower guru NRØX. Every bed was filled. And I’ll modestly add that we had a normal result – winning Multi/Multi with a claimed score of 8.2 million and more QSO’s than anyone anywhere. This was at or near the bottom of the sunspot cycle and we managed only 368 contacts on ten meters. But we didn’t realize it at the time that “normal” was about to change. The ARRL DX Phone team which followed us two later was the last pre-Covid operation, when international travel essentially came to a halt. Geoff and Dorothy did get to the station in February 2021, and put together a hybrid Multi/Single operation with Gene KB7Q and Jeff K8ND operating from Montana and Ohio respectively and Geoff operating on site. This part time hobbled together last minute operation finished second outside North America in the Multi Single category.

2022 – I was really looking forward to this, not having been much of anywhere in the last two years. The Covid requirements were a bit intimidating but not unreasonable. First the PCR test not greater than 48 hours before departure – then the “regular” test on our third day on the island – then another test on the day before departure for re-entry to the USA. All of us passed without incident – the final test was facilitated by the testing facility coming out to Signal Point to do the necessary. Surprising was the difficulty in putting together a team. Of our 25 CCC members (other than Geoff) only three could be lured down to paradise to operate from one of the world’s truly great contest stations. Yes, the pandemic is not over, but still.... Anyway Geoff, Gary N7IR, Andy W9NJY, and myself – plus guests Rudy NF9V and Kelly NØVD - put together another winning Multi/Multi effort. A very pleasant surprise was long solid openings both days on

ten meters – producing 1900 contacts and 58 mults – contributing to a final claimed score of 10.4 million and, again, more QSO’s than any station anywhere. It is highly recommended that you read Geoff’s summary of the 2022 ARRL CW DX contest at 3830scores.com. See:

<https://www.3830scores.com/showrumor.php?arg=0na5zUssmqmaT>.

As we move up in cycle 25 conditions can only get better – let’s be sure that the delightful Moran pool house and Signal Point are overflowing in February 2023!

ARRL DX SSB Contest Report

From claimed scores it appears that we have a win World #1 in Multi/Multi, and that once again we made the most QSOs of any station in the contest. It was close, as PJ4G (in Multi/2) was right behind us, but we were the top dawg.

Summary: [Compare Scores](#)

Band	QSOs	Mults
160:	214	45
80:	679	54
40:	2165	59
20:	3556	59
15:	2970	60
10:	2967	59
Total:	12551	336
Total Score		12,632,256

This team was mainly comprised of members of PCARS from Melbourne, Florida, and led by long time CCC member Dan Gravereaux, N1ZZ. As you know, Dan is a giant of the hobby, having founded West Mountain Radio and invented the Rigblaster, and now at age 83 continuing to pump out clever products under the Paradan label and other product names.

We were happy to welcome first time visitor Steve, AK4R, a long time PCARS member who has now retired to a farm in Tennessee. This was his first foray into turbo contesting, and he did a great job and had lots of fun. CCC members K5LD, K4JC, and K8PGJ all made return visits, Pete coming from recent operations in the Caymans and a family trip to Maui. He seems to be in constant motion. AD4ES and AF4Z rounded out the team, and even your editor made nearly a thousand contacts.

As you’re all well aware, 10 meters cooperated fully, but the 160 meter conditions were the worst I have ever heard from Curacao. This was a problem

worldwide, luckily, so we did not suffer in comparison. N1ZZ put in many frustrating and agonizing hours on Top Band, normally his favorite.

There were absolutely zero equipment, antenna, or software problems all weekend, further testimony to the maturity of our station.



CCC member Walter, K5LD, running 20 prior to the contest and logging on his tablet.

Walter (above) turned out to be the Rate King for this contest, logging well over 200 in the second hour on 20. Our other ops also turned in several hours of fantastic rates, and K8PGJ provided the rate and the bulk, making the most QSOs over the weekend of anyone on the team.

Unlike most teams, these guys opted to wait until arriving on the island to build an operator schedule. Here's Dan woodshedding on that job at Signal Point on Thursday.



N1ZZ deep into the thankless and complex task of crafting an operator schedule for ARRL SSB 2022.

We opted to go to Porto Mari beach for the traditional Friday lunch and noted fewer and fewer masks in evidence all over the island.

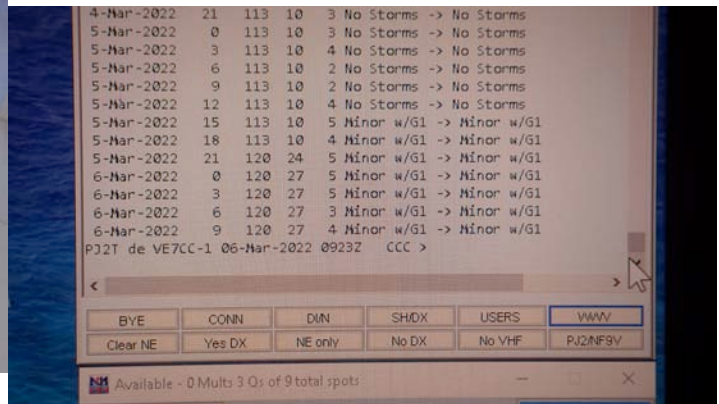


Not Sol Food: We did Friday lunch at Porto Mari instead of Sunshine's for a change. An ocean swim followed.

The contest started smoothly and glitch free Friday night. The photo is from the wee AM hours Saturday morning.



PJ2T doing what we do best. L-R AF4Z (160), K4JC (80), N1ZZ (40), K8PGJ (20).



A= 27

This weekend featured the worst 160 conditions I have ever seen here. At 5 AM local Sunday the A index was 27, later climbing to 33.

Good conditions on 10 made up for the rout on the low bands, and I at one point had the rate meter above 500, ticking off nine per minute for a brief period when

conditions were just right. I love CW, but nobody can get that kind of speed on code, so SSB provides a fun opportunity to go really fast. Most other times rates were slightly below 200 on 10 because of the fierce pileups. It was hard not to notice and celebrate the very large number of 2 x 3 callsigns, particularly on 10, as new licensees are delving into contesting with great enthusiasm.

MM-DD HH:MM	Call	Freq	Snt	Rcv	S...	M1
03-06 22:57	N9QE	21280.00	59	59	CA	
03-06 22:57	KC7ZZ	14261.00	59	59	AZ	
03-06 22:57	WI9WI	28403.93	59	59	WI	
03-06 22:57	KD2MCU	14261.00	59	59	NJ	
03-06 22:58	K8BSKE	21280.00	59	59	KS	3
03-06 22:58	KV4CQ	14261.00	59	59	NC	3
03-06 22:58	KV4CQ	14261.00	59	59	NC	3
03-06 22:26	KV4CQ	21280.00	59	59	NC	3

CCC veteran WI9WI in our log at 22:57 Sunday on 10

COVID is done on Curacao, but not in the States, thus everyone needed a rapid antigen test on Monday, the day before flying out, in order to re-enter the U.S. We again made arrangements for testing at the house, and Lab de Med showed up on time Monday morning and ran the necessary seven tests at \$35 each. Results, all negative, arrived within two hours.



K5JC and AF4Z booking Monday post-contest COVID tests in Geoff's office. The technician comes to the house for these!



The COVID test technician's vehicle outside Signal Point's grounds, Monday, March 8.

Here's the official PJ2T team photo, another superb world-winning contest effort in the history books forever.



L-R: Don (AF4Z), Pete (K8PGJ), Steve (AK4R), Geoff (W0CG), Dorothy, Walt (K5LD), Chuck (AD4ES), Vince (K4JC), Dan (N1ZZ).

Laundry Room Reorganization

As reported last month, we cleaned aggressively, and here's the laundry room after taking everything out, cleaning, tossing what was not needed or useless, and setting up organizer boxes. Now we can find things quickly and there is some spare room for expansion.



Clean and organized for a change

K0MD Withdraws

Dr. Wright has opted to leave CCC membership, with great regret. He said that his work and ham radio travel schedules simply conspire such that he would not be able to go to Curacao for years into the future, and that thus he was leaving the group. I regret this greatly because Scott has supported the club for a long time but has been unable to get here to enjoy the place, even once. As you all know, his professional responsibilities at Mayo in Rochester are immense, and his lifesaving work is extremely important. I am very grateful to K0MD for all he has done to help PJ2T and hope that the day will come when he can operate here and get some brief distraction from the demands of his medical work.



Dorothy and W0CG with Scott in Rochester, MN, August 27, 2021.

Thanks SM4KYN: Donation for House, Yard...

On February 14 SM4KYN sent in a totally unexpected donation of \$206.22, thanking me and Dorothy for all we do for this place, and instructing me to apply those funds to the house and grounds to help us continue making the fixes and improvements that are so necessary to making this place usable. Thanks Anders, and we look forward to his and Ingela's eventual return to Signal Point, post-COVID.

Getting There is Half the Fun by Jim, W8WTS

The last newsletter contained some great articles about the CQ160 CW contest and the fun we had in and around the contest. It sounded easy, but the run-up to making the CLE to CUR trip was more than a bit stressful. It turned out that the stress was unfounded; I had no COVID related hang-ups traveling to, or back from, Curaçao. To help those getting ready for trips to Signal Point, these are the details of what was needed

and what I did to make the PJ2T trip COVID and hassle free.



W8WTS setting up the 4-square, January 2022

There are two broad classes of COVID tests being given. Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests work by using a series of repeated chemical reactions to amplify the presence of the coronavirus's DNA molecules. The amplification "gain" of the test is so high that even tiny scraps of coronavirus genetic material at the molecular level are easily identified. PCR tests are nearly 100% accurate. Their downside is that they require complex equipment to create the conditions for the reactions, and time for the reactions to run to completion. Antigen tests, the so-called rapid tests, measure the presence of chemical markers produced by the coronavirus. Infections produce antigens which trigger the production of antibodies by our immune systems. There is a specific antibody that binds to the Coronavirus antigen. In a rapid antigen test, the sample is treated with synthetic, mass produced coronavirus antibodies that are tagged to indicate when they "find" coronavirus antigens. Rapid antigen tests are not as accurate as PCR tests, but are fast and inexpensive.

In mid-January 2022, American Airlines sent me an email stating that I should check the AA.com site to find out what restrictions or requirements were in place for a trip from USA to Curaçao. AA.com showed that I needed to have a negative PCR COVID test taken within 48 hours of departure. My flight was at 6:30 a.m. on Tuesday, so I made an appointment with a CVS pharmacy for a PCR test Sunday afternoon.

The Curaçao web site for international travelers, <https://dicardcuracao.com/portal>, lists four steps that everyone must do before departing to Curaçao.

1. Fill out a Digital Immigration Card. This is the same card that we have always filled out before we go through Curaçao Immigration.
2. Fill out a Passenger Locator Card. This document lets the Curaçao government know

where you will be staying in case you test positive.

3. Upload a negative PCR COVID-19 test result. There is a link to do this on the same web form as the PLC.
4. Make an appointment for an antigen test three days after landing in Curaçao. This was also part of the PLC web forms.

Step 1 is trivial. Steps 2 through 4 rely on having the negative PCR test in hand. This gave CVS about 36 hours to process my PCR test before I needed to depart for the airport. By Monday night I was packed, suitcase in the car, but no PCR result.

Up at 3:30 a.m. Tuesday, my PCR had not arrived. I had to hit the road no later than 4 a.m. to make my flight from CLE. I did not hold hope that CVS would come through before the final decision point. Then at 3:38 a.m., my phone buzzed with a text message from CVS that my negative PCR result was available. Thus started a mad dash to get the test result PDF, finish filling out the PLC and submit, printing multiple paper copies of everything, stowing my computer for travel, and launching for CLE. The Curaçao web portal cooperated and I was on the road by 4:10 a.m.



CLE was nearly empty at 5 a.m. The few people there were all wearing masks and being well behaved. I met Geoff at CLE, and CLE-MIA flight departed on time. The plane was less than 50% full, and I had my own row. The connection at MIA is a tight one, but we landed ahead of schedule, met up with Dorothy arriving from Idaho, and skipped to the MIA-CUR gate. I even had time for a breakfast Guinness at the Irish Pub in the middle of the D concourse. Once again, the plane was less than 50% full.

The process at Hato was no different than any other arrival. I had all of my paperwork in order, so they waved me through. K8ND was at the airport to pick us up. After the obligatory stop at Centrum for supplies and goodies, it was off to Signal Point for fun. Geoff, Dorothy and I all made our three-day antigen appointments at the airport testing station at the same time.

On Friday, we went to the airport for our test. The test process at Hato was extremely efficient. It was

prepaid with a reserved time slot. A girl with a tablet computer checked us in outside and told us to stand by. In a few minutes, we were called into the office one at a time for the test. We were in and out in no time. The test result email soon buzzed in negative. I had now successfully met all of Curaçao's requirements. Fast forward to Monday, when the contest was over and the receive antennas put away for next time.

For the return trip, Geoff told me about a program and associated phone app called VeriFLY. The idea behind VeriFLY is to put an app on your phone that acts as a checklist of fulfilled requirements prior to boarding for a flight. VeriFLY supports flights entering most large countries, but not Curaçao, therefore VeriFLY was not useful flying to Curaçao. However, it turned out to be a marvelous tool for flying into USA.



I preloaded VeriFLY with my address, COVID vaccine status, and a passport-like selfie photo. The requirement for entering USA from Curaçao was to have an antigen test taken during the day prior to the flight day. Geoff ran me to the airport on Monday for a repeat of the same process as on Friday. As soon as my negative test arrived on my phone, I uploaded it to VeriFLY. Once my last requirement for entry to USA was uploaded, the app showed a big green check-mark under my photo, saying that I met the requirements.

At the departure hall on my way home, there were three lines for American Airlines. One the right was the regular coach class line, having at least 20 people waiting. The next line was for first class and other special people, of which I am not one, with about four people waiting. On the left was the VeriFLY line with not a single person waiting. I walked up, showed my phone with the photo and green check mark to the counter girl, dropped my suitcase and was waved through. I never stopped walking from when Jeff dropped me off at the terminal until I was sitting at the gate. My suggestion is to enjoy VeriFLY while you can. At some point everyone will find out about it and it will become less useful. However for now, it's the gold key through the airport.

The rest of the return trip was indistinguishable from any other return. I have Global Entry, so I never have to stop and wait at immigration or customs in USA. I

got home, had dinner, and went to work the next day, with not a single symptom of COVID or any other malady in the following days. After four plane rides and four passes through airports, I'm happy to say that I beat the virus.

I was genuinely apprehensive about making the trip for CQ 160 CW. I changed my mind back and forth about going many times in the few weeks prior to the contest. These were the weeks when the Omicron variant was raging all over the world. When it came to the decision point, I dug my heels in and declared to myself that I refuse to let the virus get the best of me. I am glad that I did, since the COVID requirements, handling airports and airplanes, and managing the paperwork turned out to be very little hassle at all. Moreover, getting back to PJ2T after a two year hiatus made the COVID worries fade into the noise like the last JA on Top Band when the sun comes up.

More Curacao Bureaucratic Horrors

You'd think it should be simple: paying taxes. Signal Point's annual real estate taxes of about \$2100 are due each February. Tax statements arrive in paper mail at my Ohio address, and I pay them on my immediate next trip to the island.

But three years ago the statements stopped coming. Inquiring, I found that the government agency had updated their system, but that it was not working – they had become unable to generate tax bills because someone has burned down their building, so nobody could pay. In checking with friends and neighbors on the island, nobody was getting bills, thus no payments could be accepted. It was time to wait.

The waiting lasted three years, ending In January when tax bills for 2019 and 2020 showed up at my Idaho address. The way you pay for all years past is to physically show up at the tax office, take a number and wait a couple of hours to be called to the window, and make payment in cash. One would think that electronic payment would work, but the one year I tried that (2017) I had to fight for three years to get that amount properly credited. Nope, the only way was to physically show up with cash and walk away with a printed receipt. It took years of calls, E-mails, and visits to win that dispute about the 2017 bill.

On February 25 I showed up at the tax building with the 2019 and 2020 bills and the \$4200 in cash that I had hauled, nervously, from the States in mid-January. Voila, the tax building is shuttered. Nobody home, windows broken out, grass growing up through the sidewalk. I had forgotten about the fire. I asked around

the office campus and was sent to the post office to make payment. The intake guy looked at my paperwork, was not sure that I could pay there, took it to a window, the clerk said yes, so I got in line. Much later I was admitted to the office, took a number, waited and waited, and was turned away when the lady at the desk said they could not accept a tax payment. More wasted time. More incompetence.

So Dorothy and I drove to the main MCB bank office to attempt the payment there. The intake officer outside the door on the sidewalk looked at my papers and yes, they could accept payment, and she escorted me into the bank, stopping at a security station to be photographed. After about a 15 minute wait for them to look up my credentials, she reappeared from the back office with my ID in hand and took me to an unmanned desk with a time stamp machine. I had to fill out all my info on the tax papers, tear off a stub, time stamp all four documents, and then drop those payment stubs into a slot. No receipt, no acknowledgement of payment.



Next, to counter the huge \$4200 debit memo that I had just put in that slot, I went to a teller window to deposit the cash to my MCB account. Another long wait in line, and when I presented the account credentials to the teller there was a long delay, a conference with a manager in back, lots of head scratching, and a look of puzzlement that I had that much cash. Finally she did the paperwork, explaining that there would be a fee to make a deposit at the window, and that I would be required to make application for an ATM card. (My old card expired long ago, and I wanted no part of the endlessly complex process to renew it.) After more paperwork, more conferring behind the window with a manager, and more delay, I finally walked away with a deposit slip, minus the \$4200 cash, \$46 of which went to pay the fee to make my deposit.

I was instructed to return in 10 days to pick up my new ATM card. I showed up at the bank on March 3, stood in three separate lines for an hour and forty minutes, and finally got the card. This was a very difficult test of my patience.

Heaven help me when the 2021 tax bill arrives, which will probably be soon. Checks on the bank's on-line web site did, six days later, confirm that the tax payments and deposit were posted correctly. Phew.

This is yet one of many examples that have appeared in these newsletters about the difficulty of living here so that we can do 599K in contest QSOs on the air. K8ND's experiences here have been even worse. So CCC membership conveys real value: I do all of the frustrating and difficult work so that our club QTH will remain available to all of us for contesting. It ain't easy.

Upcoming Events

CQ WPX SSB: The operator list for this contest is K4UEE, W0CG, W4ATL, K4WK, W5MJ, KG5U, WX4W, W5GAI, N7VWH, W5XU. After multiple operator cancellations in early March we were in full panic because there were only four ops left. This was very alarming because the rental house was paid for. Bob did some emergency recruiting, and we now have a team of 10 including me. Every bed is taken in both houses. Participation in WPX worldwide has seemed down in recent years, so we are hoping that enough people get on to keep us busy and having fun all weekend.

CQ WPX CW: WI9WI and Annette are planning to run this event, subject to events in the world and several other unknowns.

IARU Radiosport Contest: DL8OBQ plans to run this 24 hour July contest as a single op, signing PJ2HQ, in connection with his hosing a group for the Dave Kalter Memorial Youth DX Adventure. Planning is still in process.

New Hotel: Definitely Happening

The on again, off again construction of a new hotel on the former grounds of the Sunset Waters Beach Resort is on. Construction has begun, and it is major.

See <https://www.avilabeachhotel.com/curacao-tips/news-facts/groot-santa-martha-awaits-unique-development>.

For a long time it appeared that this would be all talk, no action, but it's now clearly going forward. As you saw in the last newsletter, heavy equipment has been very aggressively clearing "The Flats" where we used to our receive antennas. Fortunately, I've made friends with two of the heavy equipment operators, and both have agreed to spare the space directly by the house, not digging up any more radials, Beverage coax, or removing vegetation that visually shields the patio at Signal Point. Both of these guys made good on their promises last week and left alone the area that I marked. Eventually even that will have to go, but it should be a long time in the future.

Beyond that small area, it is true scorched earth. Everything has been stripped, and the remains hauled off, relocated, or burned. Here's a giant fire from one of the piles that was lighted on February 23.



Burning trees and cactus in Flats, February 23, 2022.

The master plan is to do the infrastructure work first, enhancing utilities, moving dirt as needed, and relocating the road into the resort and our neighborhood northward so it is closer to the rock face.



My new friend Rick running the monster Volvo backhoe.

The road above the resort will be for residential construction, and the bottom (flats) for present and future hotel buildings. The first building will be far from the house, and is planned for five stories and 300 rooms. Additional hotel buildings will be built, progressing east toward Signal Point, if market demand warrants. PJ2T does not welcome this project. But it will eventually provide us with restaurants, lodging rooms, an improved beach, a pool, marina, dive shop, water sports center, and beautiful landscaping. Physical security to our neighborhood will also be much enhanced.

What Will Happen to Our Antennas?

1. The Ridge tower, tribander, and 80 dipole are safe because they are far beyond the hotel property line.

2. The “lower” US/JA Beverage is gone forever, but I replaced it on October 2019 with an 880 foot Beverage high on the Ridge outside of hotel property. The cable drop from the house to the lower Beverage is in place as of now and so we can still put out that antenna temporarily, conditions permitting.

3. The Europe Beverage trespasses on hotel property dramatically. I solved that problem in late February (story follows) by installing an entirely new feedline run and relocating the first 375 feet of that antenna wire to the safe side of the property line. That is all now safe.

4. The RX antenna white feedline distribution box across the road is safe, clearly not on hotel property, and behind the neighborhood gate, safe from the dozers.

5. A small portion of the 7/8 inch Heliac that runs to the Ridge tower infringes on hotel property at the immediate top of the rock face by about 15 feet. This has not yet been fixed, but that project is designed and it will be straightforward to move that feedline such that it is clear of the hotel property line. I’ll do this as time allows, and it will require getting an as yet undetermined length of Heliac LDF5-50A, probably not more than 50 feet, to the island. N7IR and WB9Z have already donated the necessary connectors to make this happen. Now I need some manpower, as this is very difficult and somewhat dangerous for a person working alone.

Soon, as you see, we will be 100% safe, with every part of our antenna infrastructure on the safe side of the property line, untouchable by the hotel construction activity. To be sure of that, I have very prominently marked the hotel property line on the Ridge with yellow poly rope and pink hazard tape. We will survive.

Infrastructure Changes in the Neighborhood

As you know from last month’s story, the fibre has been run throughout the neighborhood on new wooden poles. Also, that fibre has now been connected at the cablehead box at the entry to the old hotel. What’s lacking is the fibre connection from the Ridge down to the neighborhood.

March 9 – 12 were a total rolling panic here. It turns out that the hotel has filed a lawsuit to require Flow, our telecommunication provider, to get all their infrastructure off hotel property immediately. This prompted a lightning fast response. They showed up on Wednesday to put in a long (1 km) temporary phone line from the equipment cabinet at the entrance to the

hotel to our telephone junction box across the street. The goal was simply to lay the cable on the ground in the wilderness off the hotel’s property and connect it here so that the utility poles could be removed from hotel property. This was a huge job. Here’s one of their techs terminating the 30 pair phone cable at the entry to the hotel.



By the end of the day Wednesday they had laid out the black cable across the top of the residential lots above the hotel and left a huge unconnected loop at the beginning of the thick brush, The photo shows the view from that point looking south.



The end of the cleared residential area, looking toward the new hotel site.

The next morning I was shocked to hear lots of loud voices from the Ridge above the house, seeming to be coming from near our Ridge tower. I rushed up there in a panic to find a small grader and four workers at our Europe Beverage wire and the Ridge feedline, scratching their heads. They had crashed through the brush and brought the phone cable to that point. The crew chief had found my yellow rope that I used to drop the new Europe Beverage over the cliff and asked if he could use my route and my rope. (And would I show them how to get to the point below that rope, deep in the brush?) I wound up spending the rest of that day working with their crew to route the phone cable along our Ridge Heliac route, then over the cliff at the new Beverage site, then onward toward the Signal Point phone junction box. It seemed much more

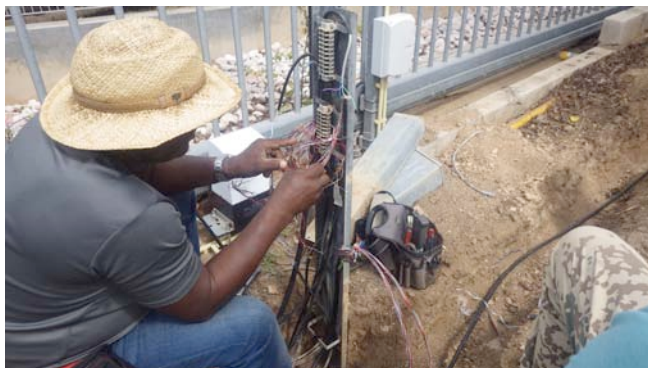
reasonable to be helpful and friendly than to make enemies of these guys. Their objective matched ours: get cables off the hotel's land. At one point I and one other guy pulled in very heavy phone cable from the road across from our house to the cliff drop point, then hauled it to the top and put on a 60 wire splice. There was no damage to our antennas or cables in that process because I was all over them watching and guiding.

The next morning (Friday) more shouting started early immediately across the street. It was four guys from Daniel Construction who were digging a trench directly by our gate, and within 6 inches of our buried feedlines from the road conduit, wailing away with pickaxes. I kept them away from our critical areas, and soon after the phone company placed their new black cable into that ditch (below).



Installing temporary phone line to the neighborhood. Note the white PJ2T RX antenna box.

Some of you have seen the rat's nest telephone connection box across the street. For years it has been a worry, and every time they came to fix a line, someone else got knocked off. Finally this Friday that all changed. A highly experienced tech removed all of the old cable, installed the new one, terminated and connected all circuits, and made it neat and serviceable.



Phone box being totally, expertly re-terminated.

The end result was a work of art, and much more reliable. That technician was interested in the hobby, knew PJ2JG, and came to see the PJ2T shack.

Now the temporary phone line from the hotel entrance to across the street is in service. Later that afternoon they laid out nearly a kilometer of fibre along that same route, across the top of the new building lots, through the brush along our hardline route, over the cliff using my rope, and ending in a coil across the street, awaiting connection. They told me it will be 2-3 months until we have that service. Meanwhile the phone service is much more reliable. Here's the genius who made the connections.



My new friend from Flow telecommunications.

I was starting to breathe after all these disruptions when on Saturday afternoon a dump truck and Bobcat showed up unexpectedly. Turns out these guys had been hired to dump loads of dirt on top of the phone and fibre from the box to a point halfway up the hill. I spent two hours intervening with them to assure that they did not destroy our cables, bury anything of ours, or break out the fence posts. What a lousy day, but they did the job OK, and it was all smiles and fist bumps when they departed.

The phone and DSL are now working well on the new temporary infrastructure, and now we await connection of the fibre. When it is time to connect the house, I will have to make a trip to Curacao to supervise the crew and make the connection at the house.

At one point in this conversion project the street in front of the house looked like a telecomm convention.



Seven of the eleven who were on site March 11.

KH7M (NA2U) ARRL DX CW

Congratulations to CCCer Fred (NA2U) for his usual outstanding effort from Hawaii. And apologies to the unlisted outstanding efforts of other CCCers in many other contests!

Band	QSOs	Pts	Sec	Pt/Q
1.8	31	90	21	2.9
3.5	269	807	50	3.0
7	801	2358	57	2.9
14	845	2517	56	3.0
21	1	3	0	3.0
21	799	2394	56	3.0
28	1257	3768	55	3.0
Total	4003	11937	295	3.0
Score: 3,521,415				
1 Mult = 13.6 Q's				

Modification of Europe Beverage

When we built the Europe Beverage in 2003 it was located in very, very thick vegetation at the top of the rock face behind the house, and nobody knew or cared where the property line was. Now, suddenly, with the initiation of construction on the hotel, it is clear that at least part of that antenna, and all of its buried feedline, is at points over 150 feet in violation of the property line. The first 150 feet or so of the wire were ripped out by bulldozers in 2019 and replaced by W8WTS. This time we're certain to lose that space permanently and must vacate immediately.

In late February I studied the aerial photos and determined that only the first 150 feet or so of the antenna was on hotel property because as you move up

the ridge to the north you fairly quickly hit the north boundary of the hotel's land. Action was needed.

As a first step I determined the location of the east property line by sighting a line along our west wall up to the Ridge. Once up there in that location I found a survey marker and a concrete pier for an old goat fence at that boundary. I marked it off with yellow poly rope to provide a point of reference. Some study of the geography showed that I could relocate the feedpoint of the Europe Beverage about 25 feet on the "good" side of the property line, and run a new coax feedline down the cliff near that point, through the vegetation below, and connect it to a spare RG-6 line from the shack at the white RX system box. After three hot days of work that 435 foot feedline was in place and connected to the shack.



The new RG-6 feedline (center of photo) from the feedpoint and down over the cliff, with Signal Point's front wall visible far below.

I then installed an 8 x 16 foot radial crow's foot and new Beverage transformer at a sturdy tree on top and connected the new feedline.



New feedpoint for modified Europe Beverage.

The next step was to begin to run Beverage wire from the feedpoint along an angle so as to intersect the legacy Europe Beverage wire near the top of the slope. This required about 375 of wire, installed through some areas of very thick prickly pear cactus growth. I

cut the legacy Beverage wire at that point of intersection, coiled it back, and connected the new wire from the new feedpoint. From there, the Europe Beverage continues as it was for 625 feet to its resistive termination. This modified Europe Beverage works beautifully, and is 100% off of hotel-owned land. As a final step, probably in the fall season, I will move the far end (termination) another 100 feet north to compensate for the lost length from the old feedpoint. This new antenna is very slightly off optimum because the first 375 feet are offset about 25 degrees from a straight line, but all is straight after that.

VE4GV Rotor Rebuild Complete

Norm's Rotor Service has completed the total rebuild of the two Tailtwisters that were donated by VE4GV. He beefed up everything, putting in stainless and titanium parts and making them much better than new. This was expensive (\$969.59) but cheaper and better than new. They are soon to be at my Ohio location awaiting the next opportunity to make the trip to Curacao. THANKS VE4GV!

Thanks W9VA



W9VA took the trouble to drive to a nearby Walmart and buy four cans of my favorite Skyline Chili, hauling them to Signal Point in mid-February. Here is the delicious result. THANKS Bill!!

Muffin Fan Rework

N1ZZ brought four new muffin fans, commercial grade, that he makes as part of his Paradan product line, donating them to the station. I suggested that we cut off the power plugs and replace them with RCA plugs so we could power them from the K3 back panel.



N1ZZ and AF4Z installing phono plugs on the new fans.

AF4Z went one better and quickly pointed out that there is a 12VDC female phono source of 12 VDC on the back of the AL-1200s. Dumb Geoff. Problem solved. We simply plugged the fans into the AL-1200s, and now they come on automatically when the amp is powered up. There's also 12 volts at the back of the HF-2500, so same solution. For the LK-800 I ran a DC line from its muffin fan to the back of the Station 3 K3, so when that radio comes on the fan starts with it. Never again will I have to rag on people who forget to turn on the muffin fans.

Going further, Dan modified all of the old fans, cleaning them up, removing the switches and thermostats, and installing RCA plugs so that they will be available for backup. This was a simple and elegant solution to a longstanding problem.



Switched 12 VDC at the back of each AL-1200

Donations from K4JC and N1ZZ

Here's CCC member Vince, K4JC (next page), delivering a stack of gifts to the station (photo) upon arrival on March 3. He and N1ZZ found an Autek WM-1 at the Tampa Hamfest, and here it is. The cardboard box contains a donated Bencher paddle, and below that is a new *ARRL Antenna Book*. At the bottom, Vince transported the newest Heil Proset 6, this bought when Heil Hospital said that our oldest

headset was unrepairable. They gave us a great 20% discount on the new one.

Thanks Vince and Dan!



K4JC bearing gifts on March 3



W0CG and K4JC with the new Proset 6.

The Oven Works!

Thanks to N1ZZ for bringing the igniter unit that I had shipped from Amazon to Dan's Florida QTH. I installed it the next morning, and now we can bake brownies again! And pizza.



Dan with the kaput old oven igniter

Happy Birthday N1ZZ



Here's indomitable Dan, N1ZZ, with the pieces of birthday cake at his right after bad singing to celebrate his 83rd, March 3, 2022. L-R: K4JC, K8PGJ, Dorothy, AF4Z, AK4R, K5LD, AD4ES, N1ZZ.

Thanks to Dorothy for the cake and her homemade white icing.

Fibre Conduit: Gift from K5LD

We are told that the fibre direct to the house will be connected sometime in the next three months pending solution of the dispute with the hotel about cable routing. They will bring the fibre to the base of a pole that they will install immediately inside our wall at the property line between us and Mike Maley next door. From there, it falls to the homeowners to provide a route for the fibre to reach, and enter, the houses.

For security reasons Mike and I decided jointly to put the fibre in buried conduit so that no part of it would be visible or reachable by the bad guys. One snip and all of the cameras and the alarm system would be rendered useless. My design called for 135 feet of 75 mm conduit to a point on the property line near our two houses, then a split with one each 50 mm conduit running to the houses. Mike's was an easy straight 25 foot route. Ours was hell, spanning 80 feet, multiple buried radial routes and a four foot sidewalk and curb.

Dorothy and I went to Kooyman on Thursday, March 10 and got all of the necessary conduit, fittings, glue, and rope, totaling \$834.34. Mike will cover half of that. At the end of the ARRL SSB contest CCC member Walt, K5LD, surprised me with a donation of about \$315 and told me to put it toward the fibre project. K8PGJ added an additional donation, as did W9VA, so the cost of the fibre conduit was mostly covered. Thanks guys! What a wonderful surprise.

I had very bad luck with sloppy concrete under the sidewalk and it took nearly two full days of backbreaking labor to get the conduit deep under that

sidewalk. The photo shows the result – the lineal offset was introduced by a pair of 45 degree ells that were needed to match elevations correctly.



Two days of sloppy muddy work to get this route under the sidewalk for the fibre.

Here I am grubbing in the mud at the maximum length of my arm, blasting high pressure hose water into the void, working to cut under the sidewalk.



Geoff's entire right arm inserted in the tunnel.

On Saturday morning I went out at 6 AM before the hot sun came up and assembled the long 75 mm diameter conduit run from the street, gluing sections and running in the nylon pull rope.



Just prior to burying the 75 mm conduit.

Zoom found some guys who were willing to do the brute digging for 150 guilders a day each. Their attitude was good but their aim not so good, and I worked with them most of the day with the pick axes and shovels to prepare the ditches. Here we are after placing the conduit long run into the ditch.



The Signal Point Excavators

Below are the split points – the conduit on the right to Mike's and the left to Signal Point.



These tubing diameters are, of course, larger than required, but bigger diameter makes for an easy pull and provides a permanent, secure route from the street to the East Bedroom for future projects if needed.



Above, trimming up the dig at the conduit split point.

