Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium
Editor: W0CG

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CCC Annual Meeting at Dayton Hamvention

Stand by for news on this. Coordination and assignment of meeting rooms at the Hope Hotel is running 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.

WPX SSB Contest Report: World #2 M/M

We always know that when Zone 33 is up, we are probably down. It was no different this time, as our friends at D3Z slaughtered the competition in WPX SSB, multi/multi. But beyond that we are VERY proud of achieving second place over perennial WPX champions such as LZ9W. Here's the outcome.

Band	QSOs
160:	7
80:	502
40:	1438
20:	1978
15:	2004
10:	1860

Total: **7789** Prefixes **1319** Total Score **37,613,923**

Multi-Op Multi-transmitter

D4Z.....82,329,786
PJ2T.....37,040,598
YT5A.....33,937,908
LZ9W.....32,625,455
NH7T.....30,634,647
WX3B.....22,405,269
OT5A.....19,978,952
NE1C.....19,660,653
DP7D.....19,643,511
NR6O.....15,276,957

(Note that CQ corrected the raw score that N1MM calculated.) Absolutely zero CCC members opted to come for this contest, and we were instead very happy to welcome a group put together by living DXpedition legend Bob Allphin, K4UEE.

K4UEE in coaching mode

We are grateful to this crew for filling in: Bob (K4UEE, Marietta, GA); Wayne (K4WK, Decatur, GA); Sherman (W4ATL, Atlanta, GA); Madison (W5MJ, Cedar Park, TX); Dawn (N7VWH, Bellevue, WA); Dale (KG5U, Houston, TX); Skip (W5GAI, Carriere, MS); Curtis (WX4W, Crestwood, KY); David (W5XU, Covington, LA)

This group of nine delightful people took a chance on us as unknowns to them to come to Curacao and experience contesting from the DX side. Their contesting and DXpedition experience ranged from quite high to nearly zero, including one operator who had never even used an amplifier. But all of them had the excellent positive attitudes that one looks for in good learners, and we managed to have a lot of fun, make a lot of contacts and, most important, make new friends. Not all of the ops had met before, so at times it seemed like Dayton/South America, having a blast meeting each other and talking radio as if we were at a hot dog cafeteria table in the old Hara Arena. (Extracted from my 3830 writeup.)

We got off to a good start on Friday night with no equipment or software problems throughout the contest. But it finally happened. At three minutes before noon Saturday, in the middle of great rate runs on 20, 15, and 10, the power went off without warning. In total the power outage would cost us about 500 QSOs in nearly four of the best hours of the contest. But we plugged on bravely, barefoot on the generator. 10 meters was the best. We were able to continue running with good rates on 28 MHz, but it was not possible to hold a run frequency on 20 and 15, which cost us dearly.

The old 5 KW camping generator keeping PJ2T on the air and the crock pot cooking the chili most of Saturday afternoon.

Some of the guys were watching the online scoreboard, and by the time the power came back up it was starting to look like we were going to top LZ9W and some of the other WPX powerhouse stations. That was exciting and kept the crew well motivated into the second 24 hours.


W5GIW looking for daylight Qs on 40.

While most of our WPX ops came from the southeast, we were thrilled to recruit N7VWH from the Seattle area. Dawn is no stranger to contesting, but being on the DX side was new for her so she dug in and prepared well in the two days prior to the contest. She turned out to be a tireless operator, tying with W4ATL for making the most QSOs during the contest. Here she is on 10.


Dawn Hanner, N7VWH, running big rates on 10.

The scoring model in WPX does not reward band-prefixes, so there is little to no activity on 160. Low band QSOs do count double, however, so we worked hard on 80 and 40 but were disappointed with conditions, particularly on 80. Both of the relocated and/or modified Beverages and their feed systems performed beautifully, and the 40 meter operators particularly raved about those RX antennas.

W4ATL (40), and K4UEE (20) at the start of the contest

Even after several days of practice and simulations and training, there were some major cockpit errors, and I mention these only because all of us can learn from errors and prevent them in the future.

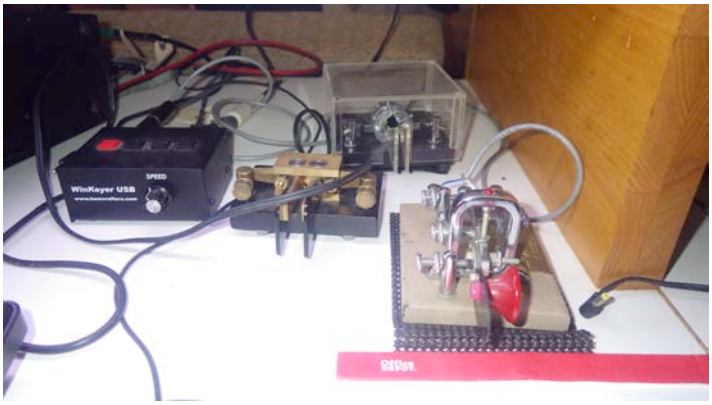
- The 80 meter station was observed to have been running for over two hours on the dummy load, not remembering a critical switch.
- QSOs were missed in the morning on a wide open 15 meter band by listening on the Beverage.
- One station ran for an extended period on 20 with the amplifier in standby.

- A station ran for a couple of hours on 10 meters while transmitting on the 80 meter two element wires.

- One low band operator ran much of the night not listening or even knowing about the existence of the Beverages.

All of this is my responsibility as I clearly did not do a good enough job training nor overseeing the operation, and it cost us a lot of contacts. But with the giant winning margin of D3Z our foul ups were of no real consequence, and we all had a good laugh at ourselves.

W4ATL knows how to dress for success in a contest.


This was an SSB contest, but the guys all brought their own CW personalities along.

Here's (next column) the team. We are very grateful to all of them and to leader K4UEE for putting PJ2T on the air in a big way in WPX SSB 2022.


David (W5XU), Curtis (WX4W), Geoff (W0CG/PJ2DX), Madison (W5MJ), Wayne (K4WK), Bob (K4UEE), Sherman (W4ATL), Dawn (N7VWH), Skip (W5GIW), Dale (KG5U)

Upcoming Events

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

CQWW SSB and CW: The formal call for operators will go out soon, but don't be shy. Let me know if you are pretty certain either or both of these are in your fall travel plans. And how about December's 10 Meter Contest? It's back now and tons of fun.

Practical Considerations for Visiting Signal Point

Only a handful of CCC members are sufficiently well-versed on the station and house to come here on their own. The house and station have become so complex that years ago we stopped renting to non-members, and now it's even a challenge for many of our members. Members are welcome here, but it's essential to get the full checkout on the house and station to be able to successfully use the facility without one of W0CG, KB7Q, K8ND, WI9WI, W8WTS, SM4KYN, or DL8OBQ on site. In the off season the house and station are very deeply mothballed, most of the radio and computer gear is put away, all the outdoor furniture is put away, there are 12 various locks and keys, an advanced security system, seven surveillance cameras, and 32 critical steps in the arrival/departure checklist. Further, many of our members are understandingly not fully familiar with the station and antennas and need support on antenna switching and software setup. None of this is meant to intimidate: it's

all aimed at the protection and preservation of your clubhouse and station.

In addition, being here requires very good handyman skills. When electrical, plumbing, or other house or station problems pop up, as they inevitably do, you need to be able to deal with these on your own, with remote coaching from Geoff. Our caretaker Zoom does not have these skills, and in Curacao there is nobody reliable we can pick up the phone and call for help. You need to be self-sufficient.

That all said, I am MORE THAN HAPPY to provide this training to anyone in the club who wants it. Please just speak up next time you are at the QTH, and we will spend a couple of days to go through it all. Your club station is here for all members.

Massive Disruption by Hotel Construction

For most of February and March we have been fighting for our lives in the face of the hotel construction. I managed to get the heavy equipment operators to spare the buried coax out to the old US Beverage, but I'm sure that will eventually get ripped out. When it became clear that they were going to clear the lot directly north of the station for construction of a future house, I knew that our Europe Beverage would become a goner as soon as site prep started. Thus, as you read last month, I worked like a dog and put in new feedline and a new feedpoint that is on the safe side of our property line, then ran in new Beverage wire. That modified Europe Beverage works well and is safe. As a final step, I removed all parts of the Europe Beverage that used to be on the hotel property.

Then, in mid-March, it we saw that the excavators were going to totally destroy the couple hundred feet of buried feedline to the old Europe Beverage. There was no stopping this, and they ripped it all to shreds on March 24. We do still have the coax from the shack out to the white box, so that leftover infrastructure will be usable in the future.

Construction / Antennas Update

1. The Ridge tower, tribander, and 80 dipole are safe because they are well east of the hotel property line.

2. All Beverage antennas, Beverage feedlines, and terminations have been relocated off the hotel property.

3. The Heliax to the Ridge has been relocated off of hotel property (story follows).

4. On April 8 I walked the heavy equipment operators to the east property line on the Ridge. This was to show them those markers and the locations of five critical PJ2T and commercial utility cables just a couple or three meters beyond that property line. I have very prominently marked the hotel property line on the Ridge with yellow poly rope and pink hazard tape. The operators promised to be careful and respectful up there as they clear that lot for a future house.

The Volvo EC3000L backhoe destroying the Europe Beverage feedline that has been buried in the woods and cacti for 19 years, March 24, 2022. This was not preventable.

We are now safe, with every part of our antenna infrastructure on the correct side of the property line, untouchable by the hotel construction activity. We will survive, but these past three months have been an epic challenge. I'm exhausted.

Coral Cliff Infrastructure

The hotel is working on infrastructure first. This includes relocating the phone and power lines and poles and putting in a new road from the hotel upper terrace direct to our neighborhood front gate. The road curve adjacent to Signal Point will be removed in a couple of weeks. Here are some more action photos.

Geoff digging (verrrry carefully) the ditch for the neighborhood fiber optic cable so as not to break our buried conduit to the Ridge.

The utility guys used my ditch the next day and were very careful around our conduit.

Fiber laid in the ditch, with our grey PJ2T conduit visible. The fiber runs under our conduit. This will be our permanent data feed to all the houses.

Moving a phone pole off hotel property and inside our neighborhood.

Two guys tugging with all possible might to tension the overhead fiber cable.

Report on US/JA Tower

I did a full inspection of the US/JA tower on April 7. It needs attention, as it has been a year since its last maintenance. We are hoping to get our professional climber, NR0X, here in the fall season to take care of the corrosion control work on this tower. Nothing is critical yet, but it the work shouldn't be delayed. With the painting complete on the Europe tower and nothing needing to be done on the WARC tower thanks to the new concrete sarcophagus, we can turn full attention and resources to the US tower through the end of 2022.

Fibre Conduit: Complete

The long buried run of 75 and 50 mm conduit for the fiber is complete. I have very carefully safed all three ends of this from critters and other leakage, and we await arrival of the fiber. We are told that the present delay is caused by a severe shortage of fiber technicians on the island. I will make a return trip to the QTH when the utility company schedules that work, as we can't trust the utility company with this critical job. I'll combine that trip with a week of work on the house and station.

The junction in the buried conduit where the 50 mm tubing takes off for Signal Point.

Note two white and one black pull rope inside. The white one in the back of the photo goes to the neighbor's house. This was a huge and costly job, but it will protect our future fiber cable forever from vandals, critters, and acts of nature.

Kitchen Touchup

Dorothy priming the kickplate for below the kitchen cabinets

When we redid the kitchen in March there was the loose end of very ugly rotted wood below the cabinets. One day in February we were in the hardware store, and while I searched for something else, Dorothy showed up with a big piece of trim in her cart and a can of paint. She did the trimming, sanding, priming, painting, and gluing on her own, with a now beautiful finished look for that installed kickplate.

RIP CCC Rotor 9

K8PGJ and I removed this rotor from the Europe tower October 27, 2021. I hauled it back to Idaho, and it ended up at Norm's rotor repair in Birmingham. On April 8, 2022 he reported that it was utterly beyond repair. This was donated by K8NZ in 2001, and had been rebuilt several times, so I told Norm to toss it into the recycle bin.

W8WTS' End of March Treasury Report

The present balance in the Station Support fund is $3664.12. I made a deposit of about $1700 on April 9 that will be reflected in next month's number.

New Gas Station Nearby

The woebegone Curoil Barber gas station has been completely facelifted, including new underground tanks. It almost looks wrong, pulling into a bright and modern station after so many years as a dump.

Tower Painting Incident and a Trip to the Doctor

Murphy arrived on March 18 while I was painting the Europe tower. I am always extra careful to avoid working downwind from the wet paint, but the odds caught up with me when a big glob of paint dropped off the tower, and the howling wind blasted it forcefully and directly into my left eye. This two component paint is chemically active, and the burning was excruciating. Dorothy and I applied all of the recommended first aid, including washes with water and saline, but after almost four hours the burning had not subsided, and the pain was even worse with the eye closed.

So I threw in the towel and went to Dr. Sommer in Barber for help. Thankfully I was seen within 10 minutes, and he relieved me with the news that there was no structural damage. He gave me three drops of anesthetic that numbed the cornea, and I practically jumped up and hugged him. Instant relief. By the time the anesthesia wore off six hours later I was OK enough to go to sleep, and by the end of the next day felt (and saw) normal. I didn't need to use the follow-on drops he had prescribed. On all subsequent tower painting sessions I wore a pair of cheap safety glasses.

What Happens When Ops Won't Come to PJ2

March 24 in Barber

This is what my worst case recruiting looks like when we can't get enough operators to come to the island. A different kind of ham.

Bathroom Sink Drains Fixed Forever

In the midst of the WPX crowd of nine ops the bathroom sinks at Signal Point backed up and dumped their output into the overflow under the kitchen sink. This is pretty much an annual occurrence, so I trotted up to the roof with my power snake to clean out the drain from the roof vent. Standard procedure. Except

this time, after two days of snaking and high strength Drano I could not clear it, and I got the snake almost irretrievably stuck twice.

I consulted with W5XU about this, and the product of those discussions was my decision to permanently give up on this troublesome small bore drain and put in a replacement. The washing machine and kitchen sink water have drained into the back planter bed for years, why not these kitchen sinks also…?

So after the crew left I picked up about ten bucks worth of PVC parts, tossed in some leftover 50 mm fiber optic conduit, and after about three hours of work had installed a diversion drain to the west back planter. This works perfectly, flows fast, and will never again be a worry.

Here's that plumbing in the early stage of installation, and the second photo shows sweet Dorothy kindly priming and then painting the inside and outside parts of the piping to make it blend in visually.

A 45 degree fitting to intercept bathroom sink water and send it outside.

Behind the brooms the new sink drain plumbing with two cleanouts that I will hopefully never have to use.

Dorothy starting the exterior priming of the new plumbing.

WPX Plaques Sponsored by CCC

From W8WTS: "I just renewed PJ2T's sponsorship of the CQ WPX SSB WORLD SOAB LP and CQ WPX CW WORLD SOAB LP plaques for $110."

Enjoying the New VE3CX Harness

Geoff preparing to do some work on the WARC tower in the Sala harness donated by VE3CX

The new Sala Exofit harness is everything we had hoped. It's comfortable, and greatly reduces wear on the tower guy because you can comfortably sit in it. This vastly improves my endurance on the tower. Further, everything is new with the attendant improvement in overall safety. THANKS again to Tom, VE3CX for his $800 donation to buy this superb piece of safety equipment.

Legacy Europe Beverage Folded Back

On March 21 I gave up on the old Europe Beverage and folded back the bottom 200 feet of wire, stashing the coils at both ends under trees and rocks, probably never again to be used. The hotel will be building houses up there, and we

were clearly in trespass at that original location. The modified Europe Beverage and feedline are safe off the hotel property and work fine, as you read elsewhere.

CCC New Members WX4W, W5XU, W5MJ. W5GIW

Prior to the WPX SSB contest I briefed the crew of nine ops on the short history of Signal Point, on CCC's operational model, and explained the critical importance of memberships in keeping this place on the air over so many years. In response four of that crew of nine opted to become members, one of whom (WX4W) did so (including paying dues) within about an hour of that meeting. I'm excited, humbled, and grateful that these super gentlemen have chosen to join our family.

Curtis Foote, WX4W, is a retired industrial chemist from the Louisville, KY area. He's extremely good with software and is a proficient contest operator, seemingly needing zero time to come up to speed on the PJ2T buttons and dials. He's the kind of person who will drop what he's doing, right now, to help out someone else. You can reach him at cwf182@gmail.com .

Curtis Foote, WX4W

David Assaf III, W5XU proudly hails from Covington, LA. David is a highly experienced engineering designer of mechanical systems for commercial buildings. Immediately upon hearing that, I began seeking advice on numerous problems I have had running the systems at our Idaho condo as HOA president, and David had all the answers. He also saw me struggling trying to multitask and fix too many concurrent Signal Point problems in the days prior to the contest. He offered help and I handed him a pile of tools and parts, and EVERYthing got done from there while I turned my attention to other things. David is a git it done person with a huge portfolio of engineering as well as handyman skills and knowledge, and we welcome his positive attitude and great smile to CCC. david.w5xu@gmail.com He's also the proud father of five, explaining that after all of that nothing causes him panic or stress!

David Assaf III, W5XU

Madison Jones, W5MJ, lives northwest of Austin and spent a magnificent career in the Air Force flying squirrely "rocket" jets such as the F-101 and F-102, and wrapping up in the KC-135 tankers. He's originally from Walla Walla, Washington, so we are practically time displaced neighbors as residents of North Idaho.

Madison Jones, W5MJ, w5mikejuliet@gmail.com

Madison probably got tired of my asking him flying questions. But as you all know I'm a frustrated professional pilot, and he has actually done much of what I only ever dreamed of.

He has participated in many, many high profile DXpeditions (TX5T, for example) and has operated from nearly 20 countries. XZ1A strikes me as one of his most exotic experiences. We welcome Madison to the gang.

Skip Cameron, W5GAI, lives across the line in Mississippi in an extended northeast connection with New Orleans. Skip spent his professional career in and around the computer industry and lived through the dog eat dog times when companies such as Control Data Corporation came and went, wave after wave. In those years he lived in seven states, but he explained the financial advantages of Mississippi, which are very compelling. He's very high on the Honor Roll. Skip is a very disciplined eater, and he and Dorothy had fun exchanging notes about their mutual interest in nutrition and healthfulness.

Skip and Dorothy talking recipes

You can contact Skip at scameron39@gmail.com .

Again, I'm very grateful to these four guys for showing confidence in our organization and their willingness to help support what we're doing. Please say "Hi" when you hear them on, and we look forward to your being able to meet some of them at Dayton.

Stray

Hammish license plates in the workshop at Bloempot Museum

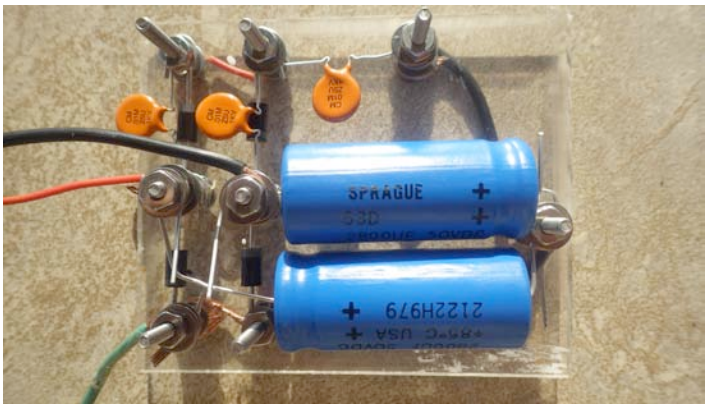
(Dorothy had a language barrier problem with a barber in town and got scalped. It will grow back, but what a shock.)

Backup Board for W9NJY Switch

In doing the PJ2T operational risk analysis one item that always stands out is the Ridge remote coax switch. We have a lot of redundancy and spares in the station, but a functionality loss of that coax switch would seriously jeopardize a contest operation. To that end, we laid in a complete set of spare parts for that device several years ago, and finally had to dip into that stash last October when the box failed following a lightning event.

The box got fixed in time for CQWW SSB last October, but it was a tense couple of days, and the troubleshooting was complicated by the construction details of the circuit board in the Ridge end of that system. Some of the components were soldered through holes in the plexiglass with very short leads. I had to practically destroy the components and the board in order to test and then replace them.

In an effort to make things easier the next time, I picked up some parts for that one board last December and finally got time on April 7 to construct the board, pictured below.



Backup control board built by W0CG, April 7, 2022

This is precisely the same circuit that was brilliantly designed by Andy (W9NJY) when he spent much of a summer creating this switch, for which he also picked up the entire cost. The difference in the board in the photo is that it is breadboarded using stainless steel nuts and bolts in a plexiglass board with no solder. The board is set up so that it will be very easy to isolate a component for testing, and then replace it, using a screwdriver and needle nose pliers. All of this can easily be done on the Ridge without hauling this heavy box up and down the hill.

You may note that the parts in the backup board are much beefier than in the original. This was simply because availability of electronic components is very sparse at present, and I had to take what Mouser had in stock. But bigger will be better in terms of resistance to

any possible future voltage spikes through this thing. Dorothy and I found a great piece of plexiglass in a dumpster last month, liberated it, and I cut out a 9 x 11 cm piece for the board in the photo. The next time we have the box down from the Ridge for work we'll install this backup board and leave it in the box and ready to connect in case of a failure.

Signal Point Now Powers the Front Gate

The Coral Cliff neighborhood gate is nearing operational status. Dirk is fighting one last problem with firmware revisions in the keypad controller. Once that's fixed the gate will be operational. Signal Point is the source of the 220 volt power for this gate because we are best positioned of all the houses to make a connection. Two weeks ago I drilled a hole through the front wall, installed some junction boxes, spliced in some additional power cabling, buried the line, and finally energized this circuit that will power the gate.

Pieces, parts, and tools for powering the front gate

For the gate to be viable we will need to leave all four of our air conditioner fuses energized, so I changed the arrival and departure checklists to reflect this requirement. The photo shows the new sign on the fuse box. Also I installed a switch on the front gate motor so that it can be turned off along with the front driveway lights when nobody is at the QTH.

We will no longer turn off fuses 17, 18, 19, 20, ever.

Thanks K4WK and W4ATL

Beginning on March 24 and then wrapping up on Monday after the WPX contest, Wayne and Sherman and I relocated the Ridge Heliax feedline out of the way of the bulldozers and over to a spot that is clear of hotel property.

This was major. About 160 feet of the Heliax was on hotel property, directly in the path of construction of a house. Even worse, the drop down the 40 foot cliff was definitely on hotel property, and we were sure to lose this feedline to heavy equipment.

I did a lot of agonizing and head scratching, and made multiple trips up the hill to figure out what to do. It became clear that the solution was to cut (ouch) the feedline at the top about three feet before it went down over the cliff. We would then (somehow) relocate that 160 feet of cable to the east, getting clear of the property line, then drop it down a 45 foot sheer rock cliff. All of this is much more difficult than it sounds because of the dense vegetation, sticker bushes and cacti, and the extreme heat. Step two would be to gather up the cable below the cut, work it down the cliff, and do a massive reroute to the east down below.

The obvious question was whether there would be enough length to enable the relocated pieces to be spliced. To answer that I taped lengths of cheap yellow poly rope to the cable and ran them along the proposed new routes. After a couple days of simulation and careful measuring I concluded that the altogether 260 feet of relocated Heliax would overlap at the bottom with about 18 inches to spare. That's close.

Wayne and Sherman and I spent a few hours Thursday before the contest clearing the routes along which we would try to wrestle/roll that cable. Here they are wondering what they have gotten themselves into.

K4WK and W4ATL, both of whom are extremely physically fit. W4ATL has run over 30 marathons.

Monday morning after the contest we went up in the 6:30 AM cool air, and I immediately cut the Heliax

before chickening out. Die cast: the Ridge system is inop. From there the project went exactly as planned, and we fairly soon had the upper cable rolled up, relocated, and then rolled back out and very carefully roped down over the cliff, unable to see how it had landed below because of the overbite in the rock face.

Then Wayne and I hiked to the bottom, leaving Sherman above to help manage the cut end of the cable down the rock face. Here's Wayne manhandling the first loop in that lower cable.

K4WK wrestling Heliax in the cacti and rocks

That went well, and we rolled the cable down through thick vegetation, re-aimed it in the new easterly direction, and then unrolled it back up the hill. My heart was in my throat because we would soon know if there would be any overlap between the top and bottom segments. It was full celebration when we got to the end and saw that there was exactly the expected 18 inch overlap. Pretty good planning.

Two days later I went back to the top and put in a permanent belay rope to take the down stress off the cable and also installed a protective rubber collar where the Heliax went over the jagged rock cliff.

The relocated Ridge feedline, protected from abrasions at the cliff edge

On that same trip I installed the common mode choke on the relocated Europe Beverage and fixed some mussed up radials from the Heliax job.

Two days later, after the big crew had departed, I went back to do the Heliax splice using a custom machined splice body made by W8WTS. Jim made three of these in 2009. I installed two of them in the line back then, and the third went into storage. On March 31 it was removed from stock and put in service, below.

W8WTS' custom Heliax splice body

Thanks to Jim's ingenious design I was able to install the splice body in about an hour, including soldering the center conductor. After full power testing I went back up the next day and put on the weatherproofing and tough sleeves and protection, including a half shell rigid PVC mechanical stiffener to unload all mechanical stress from the splice.

Stiffener for the Heliax splice

Here's (next page) the final result with all protection covers in place.

Spliced Heliax, two Flow utility cables to the neighborhood, and two Beverage feedlines in the new location

About a week later I relocated the US/JA RG-6 feedline to the safe side of the lot line using the same cut, reroute, and splice technique as with the Heliax. Job done!

CCC Spending Priorites in the Coming Year

From my perspective our #1 need for funds in the coming year will be airfare. Under CCC rules, any member traveling to the station for a week of project work receives a 50% subsidy of airfare and rental car costs. With the hotel construction underway and the fiber optics coming, there is a very pressing need to have a greater presence at the station to defend our interests. Also, when we get word that the fiber is due to be installed, it is imperative that I be there to control this process. The utility company guys are not competent, and could wreck our conduit and fiber installation if allowed to do it on their own.

I am absolutely not excited about making trips from Idaho. It's a two day project each direction, and fares are high, just under $1000 in June, for example. But I'm willing to make the effort with some financial assistance from the treasury. I'm not in a good position to carry all these costs myself. This subsidy opportunity applies to all members, not just to me.

An additional requirement for airfare dollars will come up when NR0X comes back to Curacao to do tower maintenance. We prepaid for his week of time two years back, but we will need to pick up his round trip airfare.

As for other spending we are in a very strong situation, needing no transceivers or amplifiers. One or two computers will be needed soon, but those are only around $300 each, refurbished. If, however, we do get the fiber capability, and it is as good as we hope, then serious remote operation becomes much more possible, and it would make sense to invest in expanding that capability.

For the immediate future we need to be directing treasury funds to travel subsidies. It is not business as usual at the QTH with the construction in progress, and we need to watch much more closely than in the past.

Loving Care for the Generator

The 5 KW generator saved our bacon in WPX SSB, running the station for nearly four hours and cooking chili (not bacon) on the side. To show my appreciation I changed its oil, this time putting in top quality synthetic on advice from K8PGJ. While at it I drained the break-in oil out of the new lawn mower, and it's now happily filled with clean oil.

Coral Cliff Construction Postcards - Little Comment Needed

I installed the property line marker at the left last year.

The old curved road to the right will be removed very soon.

Former site of our RX 4-square system

Mars?

737373737373737373737373737373737373737373737373737373