



Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium
Editor: W0CG

Volume 23, Number 10

October 15, 2023

CQWW SSB in Two Weeks

W0CG, W3ACO, W7MAH, K0PZH, VE4GV, WX4W, W5GAI, W4IPC, and KG5XR are ready to go for the October trip. All have turned in their flight arrangements, and the operating schedule has been crafted. We look forward to meeting new folks and greeting old friends. This team includes three college age ops, dramatically pulling down the average age of the team. Since they're young, we'll work them harder in the shift schedule <grin>. We'll also be remoting some of the operating hours thanks to N7NR, K8ND, and N7WA.

If you're curious about the dirty details, that draft schedule is at this URL.

<http://www.pj2t.org/ccc/CQWWSSB2023/draft.op.schedule.cqww.ssb.2023.htm>

New W8WTS Blowtorches

CCC treasurer Jim, W8WTS, is the proud owner of three beautiful legacy Henry amplifiers, two of which are pictured below. He picked these up from CCC member Ray, ND8L, who was cutting down his load of stuff to truck to Florida last week.



W8WTS with his new Henry 4-K Ultra and 3-K Ultra in his shack in Ohio. He also got a 2K, not in photo.



Here we are at ND8L's storage locker in Austintown, Ohio, on October 8, loading the Henry amps into my minivan.



Loading done. Those things are heavy!

These amps will help power the W8WTS monster array that Jim put up on September 28 (photos follow), including a 185 foot rotating tower and six giant antennas.



At lunch near Youngstown, Ohio, ND8L and W0CG, October 5, 2023

Curacao Day: 10-10

A very interesting news item received from K8ND via E-mail, worth repeating here.

CCC Folk:

Thirteen years ago today, on October 10, 2010 (10-10-10), Curacao became an independent country in the Kingdom of the Netherlands! At that time, the former combined islands of the Netherlands Antilles became four new 'entities' ("new countries") for the ARRL DXCC program!

Today is a holiday in Curacao, 'Curacao Day'.

They celebrate the changes and make Curacao available for 'the deserving' for DXCC credit, Bill W9VA and K8ND spent a week on Curacao at the Signal Point PJ2T station. We made 14,276 QSOs during those first days of the new country. Many more were made during the CQWW SSB and CW Contests later in the month and in November. ARRL started accepting QSO credits for the new country on January 1, 2011.

Visitors PB2T and JA1TRC also joined in to pass out QSOs!

73, Jeff PJ2ND K8ND

CQWW CW Planning Update

I'm happy to report that WI9WI, KA9DOC, and W8WTS have confirmed that they will be on the island, eating turkey with us and pumping out lots of radiated RF in November. Unlike the SSB team, which is rather small, the CW team is large and highly weighted with CCC members. Dorothy and I look forward to Thanksgiving dinner in Curacao by the pool with our extended family!

There's still one open bed in a private room for a dude and XYL, as you will see from the preplanning panel linked below. Airfares are pretty darned reasonable this year. Can you join us?

<http://www.pj2t.org/ccc/cqww.cw.2023.preplanning.htm>

Call for Operators: ARRL DX CW February 2024

VE3CX, NF9V + LouAnn, and K7TQ are confirmed for the February event. As always, we will be missing W9VA's smile and skills at this, Bill's favorite CCC event.

Team-building is in progress now for February. Let me know if you can join us! But caution, we do NOT have the Moran pool house for this one. We'll be two doors up the road in a different, but very attractive oceanside rental home.

Monthly Update: Backup Power Project

Minimal progress to report this month. But we'll soon be on the island and able to focus on shopping for equipment while there. W8WTS will be on site in November, the Dean of AC power experts, and we'll get this project figured out at that time, on site. Thanks to AC7DC, W8WTS, and W5XU for their continuing patient work on getting us independent of Aqualectra's foibles.

PJ2ND / K8ND October Report, by K8ND

I am in the final weeks of my longest stay at the Signal Point PJ2T station. Arriving August 22 and departing October 18, I will be on the island for 58 days. Having retired last year and with few family responsibilities remaining at home, I am free to spend more time on Curacao. The station is normally sitting

empty during these Summer months, before the start of the contest season. I arranged my schedule so that I depart the day after Geoff and Dorothy arrive to start preparing for the CQWW SSB contest.

My overall report is that Curacao is HOT in August and September! September is normally the hottest month of the year, but August was abnormally so this year. Daily highs were in the low to mid 90 deg F range (33 to 34C), with humidity in the 70%-80% range.

Additionally, it had not rained one drop in the first 43 days I was here! The sky opened on Tuesday 10/3, and there was strong wind and heavy rain for a long time after dark. Lightning and thunder were active, mostly to the East side of the island. Antennas were disconnected from the three stations that are installed, and for a time I turned off the station and unplugged the 'Big Red Plug' during the worst of the electrical activity. No damage to the house or station has been done.



Geoff will be replanting in October (Ed.)

The 'dog situation' was noted in the last newsletter. A pack of ten dogs (and an additional five puppies reportedly) were roaming the neighborhood, fed each day by one of the neighbors in the area just outside our wall. While they were not particularly aggressive, they had a history of surrounding people and barking.

One of the other neighbors contacted the feeder, and strongly suggested that he feed the dogs elsewhere, as they were a blight on the neighborhood. For a time nothing happened, and the feeding (with ten shiny bowls) continued. On Saturday September 30 the bowls vanished, and sightings of the dogs dropped to near zero. I have not located where the bowls have been moved.

I am attended by two cats, both old veterans of Signal Point. Crawford, the black-and-white cat with the very fuzzy tail, and Jeannie, the small tabby cat that 'meows' constantly hang close to the West porch, where I feed them. Both are now pettable and getting even more sociable. There are other cats that have been spotted, but the two 'regulars' seem to chase them away. One small calico has appeared a couple of times in the wall west of the house, and I have fed him there. There is a cat feeder station on the East porch which



Signal Point's backyard desert (Ed.)

To complicate the lack of rain, part of the automatic irrigation system has stopped working. Plants in the front of the house were not getting any water. Once discovered, I walked around with a hose and bucket, watering the landscape plants once a week.

I've kept filled, and I've spotted at least one other large cat who used it, as has Crawford and a never-ending parade of birds.

Inside the station, I have set up Station 2 & 3 and tested them. I also purchased a new monitor for the left position at Station 1, as the old one's HDMI-to-VGA adapter failed, and the spare in stock did not work. I've also installed an Elecraft P3 panadapter to Station 1, and will leave it for club use. Now that I have a K4 at home, I no longer need the P3 with my semi-retired K3.



K8ND's "look" at Station 1. THANKS Jeff for the panadapter! (Ed.)

I have not been operating on-air as much as I thought I might. After 43 days, I have logged about 8000 QSOs on 40-10 meters. I've tried the low bands (160 and 80), but have managed only 4 QSOs on those bands! I've logged over 1100 QSOs on each of 10-meter CW and SSB.

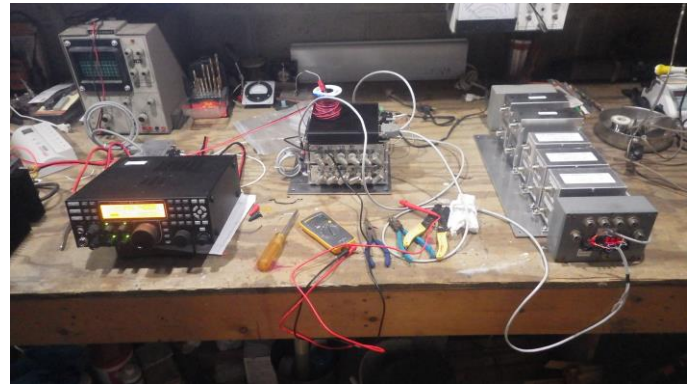
On October 11, I will attend a special VERONA meeting celebrating the 75th anniversary of that club! I return home October 18, and will be in Ohio until I start my next stay November 23. That trip will be 70 days long, including all of December and January, and including participation in CQWW CW, ARRL 160, ARRL 10, Stew Perry, and CQWW 160 CW contests.

QSL Manager News

Our new manager, Steve Wheatley, KU9C, is now up and running handling PJ2T cards. The new stock of 5000 QSLs arrived at Steve's from the VE7 printer on September 20.

Progress on Remote Station Filters

On October 6 I finally got all parts collected together and connected together and did a full test of the new bandpass filter system. Thanks to great work by Gary, beautiful assembly by Jim and donated gear from Gary, Jeff, and from the legacy spares at PJ2T, we have it working. Here's the lashup for testing on my bench in Ohio. The K3 shown is the remote station transceiver, in Ohio enroute back to the station after repair in Aridzona by N7IR.



Remote station bandpass filter system in test at W0CG

The four coax relay boxes, bank of 10 filters, Bandmaster III, N6TV Y-box, and all of Gary's carefully assembled cabling all work perfectly with the remote station K3 here on my workbench in Ohio.

I'll make up all of the coax jumpers once I get to the island, as those lengths are highly customized. The connectors (48 of them) and coax arrived here Wednesday from DX Engineering. On October 9 I bought a stripping tool and crimp die for RG-8/X PL-259s. Everything is now painstakingly packed, documented, and ready to travel to Curacao on October 17.

We have not had time to tote up the total cost of this system. But I'll report it here when we do, and I emphasize that only the ops who use the remote station will support this cost.

The bandpass filter block for the remote station is shown on the next page. We used six W3NQN filters that have been in surplus at the Curacao station for many years. N7IR then added four more that he built and aligned for the WARC bands and 6 meters (at the left). W8WTS provided the aluminum plate and beautifully mounted all the filters using home brew brackets.



Filter block for the remote station

Here's the beautifully assembled module that W8WTS put together, including two 1 x 6 coax relays, the Bandmaster III from K8ND, and control cabling made up by N7IR. It all works great.



Control module and two coax relays assembled by W8WTS

End of Month Treasury Balance

Per CCC treasurer W8WTS the balance in the Station Support fund on September 30 was \$9282.33. We have some recent deposits that I have not yet transferred to the treasurer, and are thus not yet counted in the above total. The generator and 36,000 BTU shack air conditioner are our big upcoming liabilities against this healthy-looking balance.

W8WTS Mega-Station Project: Photo Essay

September 28 was Crane Day at W8WTS near Chagrin Falls, Ohio. After years of materiel acquisition and planning, Jim's 185 foot rotating tower and six yagis went up successfully in just a few hours on a grey, cold, wet day in Northeast Ohio.

Your editor will minimize the explanations because these photos *really* speak for themselves! And if you want to see the full photo album (PLEASE DO, you'll be amazed) it's at

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/jmgalm/albums/72177720311596083/page1>.



On Crane Day, Dorothy Dahlgren and Jim Livengood, W0NB, a great friend and a key former member of CCC



W3YQ, W8WTS, and a non-ham professional climber from Tri-County Tower at the big moment of mating the first tower segment with the rotating base. This was a bit tricky because the base pivots in two dimensions on a central bearing. You can't see it in the photo, but the tower was hanging from a crane with a pick height of about 220 feet!



The climber awaits arrival of the second of four tower segments. Note the Phillystran guys hanging from the guy ring.



There were many climbers on site: W3YQ (a tower professional), W8WTS, AF8A, me, and Trevor from Tri-County Tower. But Trevor did all of the work in the air himself, learning about ham radio in a hurry. He was strong, patient, courageous, and very skilled.



Trevor at about 130 feet ready to connect the top section. Quite a chore for a guy working alone in the rain.



Tim Jellison, W3YQ, the man in charge on the 28th. Tim is the hero who donated a week of his time in replacing the PJ2T Europe Tower in December, 2018.



Trevor, the heroic professional climber who did all of the work off the ground on the 28th. He's recently married and excited to have found a well-paying career that's fun and challenging for him.



Gary (AF8A) put in hundreds of hours of work at W8WTS assembling the tower and antenna parts. Here's the top section ready to go.



One of the four giant tribanders enroute.



Prepping the lift of a giant four element 40 yagi to go to the top.

Thanks K8ND for Station Setup Efforts

As Jeff noted previously, he has invested some time in setting up Stations 2 and 3 and testing everything for functionality. This saves me some stress, as I will have a very short time this year to get the stations ready, re-install the remote radio and amp, and finish up the remote bandpass filter construction and installation.

Thanks K8ND for New Monitor

The story via E-mail from K8ND.

A few days ago, the left-side display at Station 1 started periodically going dark. It would sometimes come back to life, and then go dark again. Sometimes it did not come back.

The configuration is this: the Dell PC has two HDMI ports for the two displays. The left-side (HP) monitor has ports for VGA and DVI. For the left-side display, an HDMI-to-VGA adapter is plugged into the PC and a VGA cable run to the display.

I did some troubleshooting, including swapping in another VGA monitor, and it displayed the same behavior, so the problem was either 1) the HDMI port on the PC, 2) the HDMI-to-VGA converter, or 3) the VGA cable. I located (in Box 3) another HDMI-to-VGA adapter, and swapped it in: it did not work at all.

After some more fiddling, I determined that the original HDMI-to-VGA converter seems to fail when it gets warm. Turn the PC off for a while and turn back on, and all works again for a while.

I am annoyed by the display going dark, so after a couple of days of fiddling, I headed of the Better Deals (my favorite Curacao computer store) to make progress in fixing the problem. I ended up buying a new Acer 24-inch display with HDMI interface, a couple replacement HDMI-to-VGA converters, and a couple 6-foot HDMI cables.

The new display is working fine connected directly to HDMI. It is 2-inches wider than the old HP display, but fits acceptably into the available space (see photo).

I have discarded the two failed HDMI-to-VGA converters. I will place the two new HDMI-to-VGA converters and the two HDMI cables (the display came with one) in Box 3 (Geoff, please revise the inventory list). The HP display and VGA cable can be re-deployed as a spare or as needed.



Teamwork: W3YQ managing the climber and crane operator, W8WTS wrangling both tag lines on a monster yagi, and AF8A feeding rope to Jim.



The top of four tribanders being positioned at almost 180 feet. If you've never climbed, you can't imagine how frightening this appears to the climber.

CONGRATULATIONS to W8WTS on making this happen. Now to tackle feedlines, the big Heliac to be buried to the tower, and an elaborate antenna switching system, all fun projects for the coming months of winter.

I am NOT seeking reimbursement: I was just eliminating a personal annoyance.

Remote Station Status Check

The remote station continues to work perfectly without the KPA-1500 amplifier or its regular K3 transceiver. The amp is repaired and on site (thanks K8ND for the two-way hauling and shipment to California), and I will take the K3 (thanks N7IR) on October 17.

Another Plaque: 2021 WW Combined World #1

This nice surprise arrived in my Ohio mail in August. PJ2T took world top honors in the combined CQWW SSB and CW contests in calendar year 2021! Congratulations to all of our operators who came out at the top of the world!

This is the culmination of a great deal of effort, support, teamwork, coordination, and just plain dirty hard work to achieve this operating goal. Everyone in CCC had a hand in this, and everyone should be very proud.



World #1 Combined CQWW 2021: PJ2T

WIDED Interview Monday, October 2

Most of us have seen the excellent WIDED podcasts on a whole range of ham radio topics. Kevin chased me down and put me on camera from my shack in Ohio a couple of weeks ago. As always, you think of everything you should have said, and should not have said, after the fact, but here's the raw result. Apologies for anything that I goofed up!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYwST3a0LV0>

The New K3S

Thanks again to Gary, N7IR, PJ2T Station Equipment Lead, for all of his work and skill. He's an expert on

Elecraft equipment and has a very well-equipped workbench in Arizona. Gary led the acquisition and setup of our new K3S. This was a lot of work, removing outdated modules, selling them off for PJ2T revenue, and acquiring and installing new updated hardware. Gary will bring this K3S, our ninth Elecraft transceiver, to the island in November.

Thanks N5BR for the Surprise Gift

On October 11 I was very pleasantly surprised by the unexpected arrival of \$250 into my PayPal account from Cal Birdsall, P.E., N5BR. Cal was with us on the WPX SSB team in March of 2023, making his first trip to PJ2T.



Cal Birdsall, 20 meters, March 25, 2023

Cal amazed and inspired us all as an immeasurably fit, busy, active, youngster at 85. He's an entrepreneur with a successful business producing equipment for metals processing and milling, and over the years has owned and flown several wonderful airplanes, most recently a twin Beech Baron. We found plenty to talk about in aviation and in business.

We also discovered a fun geographic coincidence in that his company is presently working a big project in a mill in Girard, Ohio. I drove past that place on the way to work every day years ago in Youngstown, and Dorothy and I were just there in Girard last Thursday. Cal and I are hoping to meet there for lunch next year when he's at that location on business.

We'll use his kind gift very carefully toward needs of the station and the QTH.

K3/0-Mini Repair News

Months ago we took a gamble and bought some remoting equipment from a seller in Montana. The seller made it completely clear that the gear was inop, and gave us a very low price.

The gamble was not very successful, but we're working on a recouperant. One of the items was a DOA K3/0-Mini. N7IR has sent it to Elecraft for repair. If it can be fixed, I will buy it for myself at a generous price that will recover all of what the club's remote fund spent on it.

For Sale: RG-8X Crimp PL-259s

W8WTS and I messed up and duplicated purchases, so CCC has 48 of these for sale at cost: \$26.99 per bag of six. See <https://www.dxengineering.com/parts/dxe-pl259cs8x-6>.



Take some or all of these, and this will help us recover the double spending from the Station Support treasury. E-mail W8WTS with your interest jim@w8wts.com.

More Photos from the PJ2T Wayback Machine



This 15 meter boom broke in 2006 after dissimilar metal corrosion sliced it nearly in half. Lesson: never use a galvanized U-bolt on an aluminum tube in salty air.



Next lesson: Hy-Gain boom to mast brackets do not work long term on the island. We had to cut this one off with a grinding wheel. N8LGP made these new boom cradles from anodized aluminum, and they are still working great, no corrosion.



2006: K8ND and W0NB (pictured elsewhere in this issue) painstakingly rehabilitating salt-damaged antennas. We applied what we learned from this and have not had recurrences.

