



Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium
Editor: W0CG

Volume 23, Number 11 **November 15, 2023**

CQWW SSB 2023 Is DONE!

Band QSOs Zones Countries

160:	75	10	21
80:	591	20	68
40:	2019	28	104
20:	3001	37	123
15:	3582	37	127
10:	3361	31	115

Total: 12629 163 558 Total Score 26,702,235

You can read the 3830 comments if you wish at <https://www.3830scores.com/showrumor.php?arg=DBa0zuyvssvmX>

Based on posted claimed scores, the numbers above make us second, a very distant second behind CN3A in M/M, World. That's a super outcome if it holds up after log checking. Here's the contest story.

W0CG, W3ACO, W7MAH, K0PZH, VE4GV, WX4W, W5GAI, W4IPC, and KG5XR all arrived on time and unscathed. Nobody was hassled in the least by Curacao customs.

After the usual couple days of settling in, fiddling, fretting, practice, and cleaning up a lot of station problems we made the now traditional Friday noon pilgrimage to Sunshine's and David's at Westpunt for pizza, fish, and relaxation (next column).



L-R: Rich (W3ACO), Melissa (W7MAH, our chef, and Rich's daughter), Skip (W5GAI), Pam (Skip's XYL), Levi (KG5XR), Connor (W4IPC), Paige (K0PZH), Cindy (WX4W's XYL), Curtis (WX4W), Dorothy, and Rob (VE4GV).

After digesting all the food it was contest time. We were very fast out of the gate at 0000Z, with an excellent 413 contacts in the log in the first half hour, and 728 after 60 minutes of operation. Particularly notable is that VE4GV (photo below) spun off 321 QSOs in his first hour (20 meters), one of the best single hours I have ever seen at PJ2T.



Dr. Rob Kaufmann (VE4GV) in the midst of a 321 hour on 20 SSB.

Additionally notable is that we posted 192 QSOs on 40 in the first hour ON THE REMOTE. N7NR manned the 40 meter position from Huntington Beach and put up a fabulous number. This is the first time we have had sufficient confidence in the capabilities of the remote station to start a contest with it, and that confidence was rewarded. There were no tech problems, and the wide area networked log inside the Hamachi VPN was virtually seamless across the entire team both here on site and at three remote locations (photo).



W4XW at the opening making his way through a cloud of PYs and LUs on 15. Paige, KOPZH watches from the table.

MM-DD HH:MM	Call	Freq	Snt	Rcv	M1	ZN	M2	PFX	Pts
10-28 00:19	K9TI	7204.20	59	59	04		K		3
10-28 00:20	WR2G	14195.28	59	59	05		K		3
10-28 00:20	K1TT	7204.20	59	59	05		K		3
10-28 00:20	PA2E	28420.00	59	59	11		PY		1
10-28 00:20	W8WDA	14195.28	59	59	04		K		3
10-28 00:20	K8AZ	14195.28	59	59	04		K		3
10-28 00:20	K3SV	7204.20	59	59	05		K		3
10-28 00:20	ZP5VIA	28420.00	59	59	11		ZP		3

The log at 19 minutes

The three 40 meter QSOs shown above were made by Dave in California, but they appear in the log alongside our local QSOs. Miraculous. Thanks to W8WTS for starting us out on wide area logging and to Gene (KB7Q) for perfecting the art using the Hamachi VPN. This is very very easy to configure and execute, and rock-reliable.

Unfortunately Murphy was not to leave us alone. At about midnight, after only four QSOs on 160, the antenna failed with high SWR. I went up the tower to cut away some branches that were causing high SWR, but by then the damage was done, and the unun transformer blew about 10 minutes later, preventing any operation on 160 the entire first night. It was dark, buggy, and raining, and dynamic troubleshooting was not in my plan. We fixed that antenna on Saturday afternoon (story follows), so the second night brought some Top Band productivity.

Overall the bands were much worse than in October of 2022. There were many periods when the high bands simply went silent for half an hour or so, then gradually recovered. Last year we were in a sweet spot on the globe, this year a sour spot. The Caribbean stations to the north of us did not experience this, so such is the luck of the draw.



At the start: Curtis (WX4W) in the background at Station 1 (15), Connor and Levi (W4IPC and KG5XR) on 10, the 40 meter seat empty but staffed remotely from California by N7NR, and Rob (VE4GV) blazingly fast on 20. Chip (W5GAI) looks on at 20.

We put PJ2T on the online scoreboard this year for the fun of it (photo).

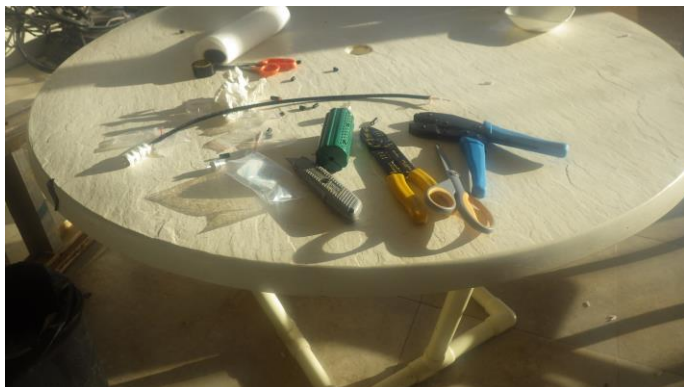
	Score	QSO	Mult	Countdown	
PJ2T	26,541,360	12,575	720	557	163
K3LR	26,088,654	11,193	897	708	159
V26B	24,540,876	13,857	711	593	158
KH6J	18,710,710	9,541	607	436	171
PV2K	16,654,293	8,747	657	509	143
A44A	14,348,720	7,435	670	529	141
W0CB	12,424,516	6,490	709	556	153
OT7T	11,320,232	8,034	799	633	156
K1TTT	11,044,350	5,634	729	575	154
LN8W	10,189,722	7,782	831	659	173
K9RS	8,228,708	4,017	714	558	158
W3PP	7,339,002	3,769	682	536	145
EA4URE	7,021,550	5,586	634	498	138
K3EST	6,213,640	4,048	620	458	162
9H6A	3,891,711	5,513	503	395	180
PIACC	3,292,962	3,007	613	481	152
K1KP	2,908,992	1,839	556	441	155
PA6AA	2,413,883	2,800	561	429	129
KB3VOC	2,061,457	1,336	557	38	203
IO3PWW	1,534,000	1,010	432	338	88
IR8W	148,990	492	8	5	10
HB9HF	168	7	4	2	2

Online scoreboard at the end of the weekend

The crew had a good time watching us and K3LR swap spots many times over the weekend. We ended up on top of the posted multi/multis, pending log corrections. All in all it was a successful weekend, the

gang had fun, we overcame a lot of troubles, and proudly put the PJ2T callsign on once again for the world to see.

A random photo log follows.



Geoff's coax jumper factory. I made 24 RG-8X cables for the remote station filter panel on Friday, October 20. This took up the whole day because every cable was a custom length. This was essential to the WW SSB contest effort because we needed these filters in order to easily integrate the remote users into the contest.



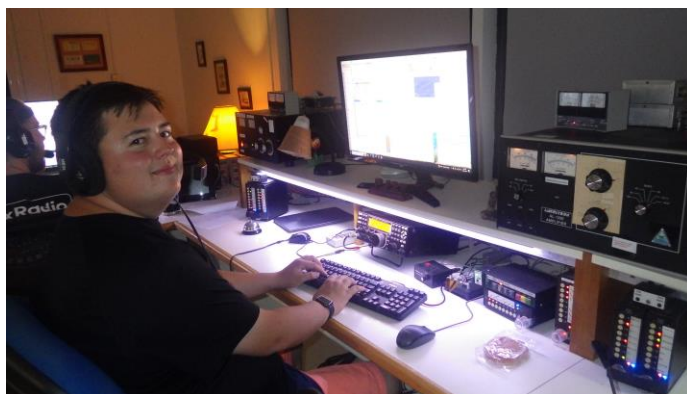
On Thursday W7MAH, KG5XR, W4IPC and I spent hours on the Ridge reinstalling the coax relay box and policing both Beverages. We did find and fix a break in the Europe Beverage at 500 feet.



Skip (W5GAI) and his XYL Pam with Dorothy on the East Porch



Levi (KG5XR) and Paige (K0PZH) at Stations 3 and 4. Both are top notch competition operators.



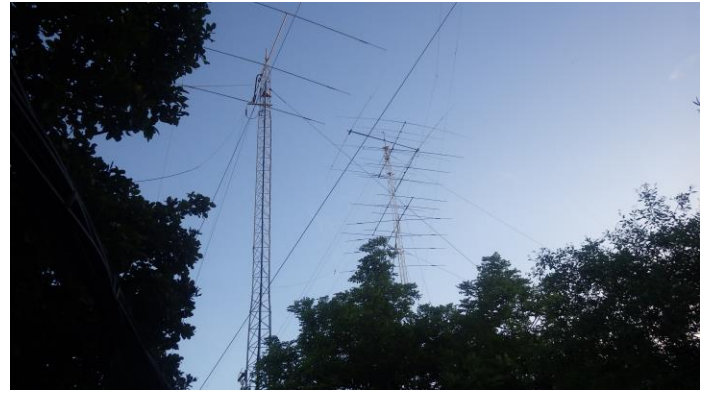
W4IPC, always happy, and able to seriously multitask while running 250+/hour



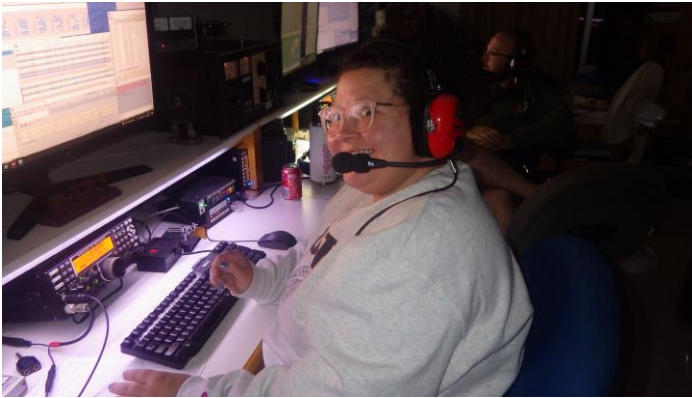
Here's the 40 meter operator during a contest shift. He looks a little bit disembodied.



The blasted 160 TX unun transformer on Saturday, DOA.



Early Sunday morning and the 40 yagi is nabbing VK/ZL and YB contacts easily



K0PZH gamely slogging it out on 20 in the wee hours Saturday morning



6:30 AM Sunday, a peaceful morning with excellent greyline conditions



W4IPC and W3ACO early Saturday morning



Sunday morning breakfast with lots of French toast and bacon as well as healthy alternatives; Melissa took extremely good care of our palates all week.



Not all of the team was in the shack at the finish. Here are W7MAH, W3ACO, W4IPC, WX4W, KG5XR, and K0PZH. Everyone else had already started celebrating.



Monday morning, the team photo: Dorothy, Curtis (WX4W), Cindy (WX4W XYL), Geoff (W0CG/PJ2DX), Connor (W4IPC), Levi (KG5XR), Rob (VE4GV), Rich (W3ACO), Paige (K0PZH), Pam (W5GAI XYL), Skip (W5GAI), Melissa (W7MAH). Remote ops N7NR, K8ND, and N7WA are, of course, not pictured.

The CW weekend will be along before we know it. Many thanks to the SSB team for making the effort to put PJ2T so visibly on the bands, and to all CCC members for making operations like this possible.

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 contacts. The preplanning panel for the contest is at this URL.

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

In preparation, I've retuned all of the 80 meter antennas from SSB to CW. We'll have the stations ready well before the crew arrives.

The Germany 3CX1200A7 is Good

We reported earlier here that DL8OBQ had miraculously located a new-looking AL-1200 tube in Germany last spring. He managed to buy it for the rather ridiculously low price of \$400, packed it very carefully, and brought it to Curacao in July when he came for the IARU PJ2HQ Radiosport contest. It got stashed with my socks and tee shirts in Dorothy's and my room, awaiting testing.

On November 2 I installed it in the amp at Station 2 because that's the one that's easiest to physically get to in front and back. Because we didn't know the history of this tube I took the extreme conservative approach and seasoned the filaments for almost eight hours. No RF. At the end of that period I gently brought it up to 400 watts on 80 meters. Voila! The tube is good. After a couple of test QSOs on 80, I moved the radio to 10 the next morning and slowly worked the tube up to full output as I made a handful of SSB contacts into Europe. I then labeled the new tube, logged it into the inventory records, and re-stashed it for permanent storage, putting the old tube back into the Station 2 amp and reinstalling all those screws. We thank Uli for this brilliant stroke of getting this rare tube, and at such a good price.

Repair of Ridge Remote Coax Switch

K8ND reported in October that the Ridge 80 meter inverted vee was inop. This would be a serious impediment to the upcoming CQWW SSB contest, so I undertook troubleshooting immediately.

Tests made in the shack and subsequently on the Ridge on October 20 showed that the control box on the Ridge was not working. Both of the antennas looked good on the AA-54 analyzer, and the correct voltages were making it to the Ridge box, so I brought the switch box down to the shack for repair.

This box had failed before, and I had replaced one diode two years ago and gotten it back into operation. But this time the troubleshooting was baffling. Rich (W3ACO) arrived in October 24, and together the next day we isolated the fault to be that two of the three relays had failed. The control voltages were OK and the rectifier board had no faults, but neither relay would operate with 12 VDC applied directly to the coils. Rich's theory is that the contacts are fused together, but we won't know until we get them out of the box in November.

Fortunately, one relay did still function, feeding RF to Port 2 successfully. So we decided to disconnect the coils of the bad relays, re-connect the 80 vee to that functioning port, relabel the control switch in the shack, and reinstall the box on the Ridge. The photo shows that in process.



Levi, KG5XR, reconnecting cables after reinstalling the coax switch box at the Ridge tower.

This workaround brought the 80 Ridge vee back into service, and it worked well in CQWW SSB. I ordered five replacement relays, and W8WTS will bring them in November. We'll replace the two bad relays and have three spares on hand in case all three fail at once in the future. We'll also add some transient protection (TVS) diodes that are being brought to the island by N7IR in November. Replacing these relays will require major patient surgery in that control box.

Last year, in expectation of more failures of the rectifier parts in this coax box, I built an entirely new board with easy to replace components. I tested that board during last week's troubleshooting, and it is fine. That board is in storage for when it may be needed. This coax switch box is a critical strategic failure point at PJ2T that could torpedo an entire contest, so I've stocked plenty of spare parts.

VERONA Dues Paid

As you know, we voted years ago at the CCC Annual Meeting that all CCC members would concurrently become members of VERONA, Curacao's excellent ham radio club. Dues are 100 guilders annually, but they cut us the deal of a 50% discount in appreciation that few of us are ever here to consume any of the club's resources. That makes our annual dues \$28.57, which are paid as part of your annual CCC dues.

Now that all of the CCC annual dues have been collected for Year 24, we transferred the VERONA dues to the club in mid-November. That total amount was \$870.79 for our 29 members. (If you check the math and it doesn't add up that's because K8ND and I, as Curacao legal residents, pay the full regular VERONA dues amount.)

Doing this is a powerful gesture of the international friendship and mutual support that is so much a part of amateur radio worldwide. Thank you!

I've been friends with Brett Ruiz, VERONA's president, since we first met here on the island in 1999. Since that time both Brett and VERONA have been good friends to PJ2T and have helped us in countless ways. The photo shows Brett and his son Caleb at my Ohio home in August, 2006.



Caleb and Brett Ruiz, PJ2BR, at the W0CG QTH in Ohio, 2006

ARRL DX CW February 2024 Is Fully Staffed

VE3CX, NF9V + Lou Ann, K7TQ, N1ZZ, W4SO, AD4ES, N0VD, and Christine are confirmed for the February event, and all sleeping spaces are taken. As always, we will be missing W9VA's smile and skills at this, Bill's favorite CCC event.

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. Dorothy and I got a

tour of that house on November 9 and found it to be very attractive. Each bedroom has a queen bed and its own private bathroom. There's also an outdoor shower and easy access into the ocean for snorkeling.

All members are welcome at all contests, so if you want to sign on we will find additional lodging.

Repair and Modification of 160 Inv L

The inverted L has served very well as our Top Band transmit antenna for 23 years. Multiple 160 meter World #1 contest plaques have come our way via that TX antenna. But as you saw earlier in this newsletter, that unun transformer that feeds the antenna breathed its last breath just after 2400Z on Saturday morning, 28 October, 2023. High SWR induced by contact with some tree branches triggered this failure, but I suspect it was about to go anyway. See the photo, a dupe of a prior photo – it blew in spectacular fashion.



The remains of the 160 unun, 28 October, 2023

Rich (W3ACO) led me through the troubleshooting effort on Saturday afternoon. We checked out the antenna with the AA-54 graphic analyzer, and it appeared that we would have a nearly perfect match with the transformer removed. So we hooked that up in breadboard and were thrilled to see that the antenna would be good, 50 ohms resistive, without the “matching” transformer.

Thus we made that test connection permanent (photo next column), tested it at a full KW, and then waterproofed everything.



Rich (W3ACO) directing, Levi (KG5XR), and Connor (W4IPC) as we assembled the antenna permanently without the transformer.

The result was not only a perfect match, but the antenna is now significantly broader from 1.8 to 1.9 MHz. Job well done.

Later, W8WTS correctly stated that this should be about a 28 ohm antenna, not 52, and that the present situation suggests that the radial system is seriously deteriorated. This is a timely comment because I have had “radial testing and restoration” on the work list for the last three years, and we still have not gotten to it. Many of our radials toward the west were destroyed by the bulldozers. Hopefully we will have enough people on hand for CQWW CW to repair some of these radials.

Monthly Update: Backup Power Project

Minimal progress to report this month. But we'll soon have W8WTS on the island and able to focus on designing the circuitry and shopping for a generator.

Last week our across the street neighbor received the generator that he bought at auction in Holland. It's a 25 KW diesel, 3 phase, 50 Hz, and with ocean freight, tax, and Curacao import duty he got it here, not new but never used, for about \$8000.

Initial “Repair” of 80 3 el Europe Antenna

When I arrived on the island the 80 meter 3 el Europe delta loop was dead. The analyzer showed that there was absolutely no antenna connected. Since this was not needed for the contest, we didn't make its repair a priority.

But Friday afternoon after pizza and before I had to configure the shack and software for the contest start we took a try at the repair.

We were a bit too cocky and rushed, because we quickly verified that the feedline was fine, but that the feed insulator had suffered a permanent failure with a broken connection stub. That center insulator went straight into the trash and we replaced it with a coax pigtail that we found in PJ2T surplus (photo).



KG5XR, W4IPC, and W3ACO fixing the feedpoint of the delta loop beam.

Unfortunately we hurried too fast through this repair, and it did not work. I was 30 minutes overdue to start the software setup at 4 PM, and we were not careful enough. I re-addressed this after the team left (story follows), and it is now working perfectly.

Remote Station Filters Are in Service

This project is finished. On October 6 I finally got all parts collected together and connected together and did a full test of the new bandpass filter system in Ohio. That went fine, and I packed everything for the airlines and took it to Curacao on October 17.

I spent three days installing and then troubleshooting everything, and the system is now up and running well.



The new block of 10 bandpass filters is at the right, below the monitor. The Bandmaster chassis and two of

the four coax switches are above the rightmost ARRL plaque.



Closer view of the Bandmaster chassis and a bundle of 14 RG-8/X coax lines



Above and below this filter chassis, built by W8WTS, you can see two 1 x 6 coax switches. These were at PJ2T for many years in surplus and are now in service at the remote station.

This filter system will be extremely valuable in protecting the remote station's K3 from front end damage. We've already blown that radio once, back in July 2023. Everything works perfectly except on 6 meters, for which these coax switches were never rated. But we have a workaround for this, so this project is now at a successful and happy end.

Thanks again to N7IR for design and fabrication work and construction and donation of four filters, to K8ND for the donated Bandmaster, to W8WTS for physical construction of the two chassis units, and to an anonymous donor for some financial support on this project. At PJ2T, WE GET THINGS DONE!

End of Month Treasury Balance

Per CCC treasurer W8WTS the balance in the Station Support fund on October 31 was \$10507.18.

Remote Station Status Check

The remote station is 100% back intact now, with the KPA-1500 amplifier repaired, returned, and installed. The original K3 is also re-installed after a trip to the K3 doctor (N7IR) in Arizona for a blown front end. And, of course, the bandpass filter system featured above is finished and working well.

The only problem: Where are the users? In my three weeks here thus far this fall, the remote is being used very little. We know it works, because it made 2500+ QSOs in CQWW SSB. This is a magnificent capability, and I don't understand this light load factor.

I love it and use it a lot when I'm in Idaho. KB7Q's installation and operation manuals are masterpieces of succinct, on-target technical writing, and most users have been able to get up and running using Gene's manual within a couple of hours. Our remote station is stable, complete, powerful, flexible, and fun. Let's use it.

ASUS Router Failure

Since January of 2010 the ASUS router has been powered up 24/7 while people are on site. Then, in 2018 when I began installing Ring security cameras, that router switched to 24/7/365 always-on service, so it has worked hard in high heat and humidity for many years.

On October 18, the day after I arrived, that router failed hard, never again to route. Welcome to Curacao, Geoff. The next day I bought a Linksys replacement

router at Better Deals, and KB7Q (working remotely) and I set about installing and configuring that new router. Linksys was far from my first choice, but we're constrained to what is in the stores.



After some considerable hair pulling Gene and I concluded that this router was not going to meet the complex needs of Signal Point because it was not sufficiently customizable. The router was designed more for an unsophisticated homeowner user, and not for the pros. There were no ASUS routers readily available on the island, so what to do? After more discussion we realized in a burst of insight that the router was architecturally simply not needed here, and that we could attach all of the on site devices and accounts to the Sercomm optical fiber modem/router and get rid of the secondary router and its associated LAN.

To implement this I configured the Sercomm to support all of our existing devices using names and passwords that matched the discarded ASUS router. That was highly successful. This new router now supports the Cisco gigabit IP switch that drives all of the shack PCs, both wireless guest accounts, all six Ring cameras, all three Foscams, the remote station, and the laser printer.

I updated and republished the master PJ2T architecture diagram to reflect these changes, and we are now up and running successfully on the Sercomm only, with a simpler overall IP architecture at Signal Point.

Bring on the Youth!?

There are very talented and motivated young contesters here and there. We proved that to ourselves this week with W4IPC, KG5XW, and K0PZH on our team, all of whom are extremely proficient on the air and have very high levels of enthusiasm and energy. I also saw incredible young ops at WRTC 2022 in Italy: super young people who are very accomplished contesters. Our hobby is not dead, and the younger generation is interested. If PJ2T is to survive going forward, we can help them and help ourselves by finding these young ops and growing and supporting them. The following photos (next page) feature some young ops I have been fortunate to meet recently.



German and Irish young contesters at WRTC 2022



Slovenian youth contesters in Italy, July 2023

Now, the key point, what can we do?

Levi and Connor (from our 2023 PJ2T CQWW SSB team) told us that they could easily and quickly find a dozen top ops who would love to join a contest team at PJ2T, and that some searching would turn up a lot more of them.

But, think back, what was your (and my) key defining characteristic at that age? We were all broke. And it's even tougher now with the high cost of college and deep debt burdens on young students. Thus, we're asking for your reactions on whether it might be possible to raise some money within CCC to sponsor young contesters to come to the station. For example, W3ACO discovered Paige (K0PZH) in Iowa, supported her interest in contesting, and paid for her trip this week, around \$1K plus airfare. We could try to raise some "youth money" within CCC, and then possibly go outside the club and see if we could find support from the contest community at large.

Right now these are nascent, preliminary ideas, but let's talk. What do you think?

For Sale: Linksys Router

As explained above we now have an unneeded, completely new Linksys Max-Stream dual band router (below).



For Sale: Linksys Max-Stream AC1900 router, surplus to Signal Point's needs

I'll take to the States in December. If you would like to have this unit, it's listed on Amazon for \$80. (We paid \$142 for it on the island.) It's not returnable here because we opened the shrink wrap and powered it up. Let me know?

If nobody wants it, we'll hold onto it in reserve in case a need arises in the future at the station.

W1DED Interview Monday, October 2

This was reported last month, but several have asked for the link again to the W0CG interview by W1DED. Kevin did a very slick editing job, inserting relevant photos and graphics along the way.

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

The New K3S

We look forward to our first K3S arriving at the station in November. Who knows, maybe we'll put it on in the contest, Thanks again N7IR for locating this good deal and configuring the radio for our use here.

DXE Crimp Tool Problem

K8IV gave the station a DXE coax connector crimping tool several years ago, and it has been a boon here, particularly when I had to fabricate almost 50 coax jumpers for the remote station in late 2022.

In mid-October, I needed to make 24 RG-8/X jumpers for the remote station filter panel as explained above.

Prior to the trip K8ND checked the K8IV crimp tool and confirmed that it would not handle these smaller PL-259s. So I dutifully made the three mile drive to DX Engineering from my Ohio home and picked up the correct die for our Signal Point crimp tool. On that same trip, I bought a coax stripping tool, as recommended by W8WTS.



But then a roadblock came up. Once on the island I was totally unable to find the needed 2.5 mm hex wrench to remove the old die and put in this smaller one. So we trotted to Kooyman the next day and bought a high quality set of T-handle metric hex tools. Back home, went I excitedly grabbed that tool to take out the hardware, but the nut absolutely would not budge. After soaking it in solvent for hours I tried again, rather aggressively, and the hex wrench tip broke off in the bolt. Frustration. Now we had an emergency, so I hopped on the DXE web site and ordered the correct crimp tool for delivery to KG5XR, who was coming to Curacao the following Tuesday.



Then this story gets even sillier.

Reading the E-mails about my frustration, N7IR tactfully pointed out that I was probably an idiot because he was pretty sure that he had brought and left behind the needed crimp tool when he rebuilt the RX antenna cables a couple of years ago. Sure enough, I found that tool, confirmed that I am indeed an idiot, and went happily to work on a Friday making the jumpers. I quickly became proficient, did them all in a day, and thanked Levi the following Tuesday for bringing the duplicate tool. I didn't even have the heart to tell him that it was now redundant. I declared that I would eat the cost of that second crimp tool, but a mysterious angel intervened and reimbursed my fallacious purchase. The job got done, we have both sizes of crimpers in stock at PJ2T, and all is well except for the pile of white hair that fell out and landed at my feet during this whole episode. Such silliness.

Here Comes Radioteam Finland!

All of us are very familiar with the epic Radioteam Finland operations in 1990 from the Coral Cliff neighborhood. In fact to this day we are using one of their amplifiers at our 40 meter position.

Two weeks ago I received the E-mail below from Timo, OG9X, which speaks for itself. There is, then, a very good chance that we will have a big CQWW season in fall of 2024, with an on-site commemoration of PJ9W in October and our own PJ2T 25th anniversary celebration in November.

If you want a refresher course, or if you've not seen the famous WA7LNW video about Radioteam Finland at Coral Cliff, Curacao, I can guarantee that you'll find it worth 48 minutes of your time. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=165qx1ENVBI>

I'll keep you posted.

Hi Geoff

Touko OH6RM, who made all towers and antennas for PJ9A and PJ9W operations will be 80 years old at 28.2.2025.

His son asked me if it would be possible to organize a celebration operation at Curacao.

As he was mainly CQ WW SSB operator I ask you if PJ2T would be available for CQ WW SSB 2024. A combination of PJ9W operators from OH and US and some of PJ2T members to join forces to operate CQ WW SSB 2024 as M/M.

If it is possible, what would be the cost of the station?

73, Timo OG9X

Repair Status of K3/0 Mini

On November 1 N7IR heard from Elecraft about the K3/0 Mini that Gary sent in for repair. This is the mini that we bought at a good price in Bozeman, knowing that it was bad. The gamble was that it would be repairable. Here's the body of the message from Elecraft's Chris Angelos.

Sorry for the delay of the repair of your K3/0 Remote Control Panel. Thank you for your patience. It has a Voltage regulator integrated circuit on the rear panel circuit board that has no output. Unfortunately, Elecraft does

not keep this integrated circuit in-stock. Although our purchasing manager ordered the part back in mid August it has since remained on backorder. The revised delivery date has been extended to February 25th. It should not be difficult to repair your K3/0 when the integrated circuit arrives. I hope this helps.

Our response was that we are happy to wait as long as there does not appear to be anything else bad.

Then we got lucky. Gary suggested that Chris check one more time to be sure that he saw nothing else blown in the Mini. On his second look, Chris at Elecraft discovered that Q4 on the front panel was bad, replaced this \$0.45 transistor, and the radio tested 100% good! What a break. No need for the backordered voltage regulator.



K3/0-Mini with RRC boxes

Long ago we paid \$500 for three RRC boxes and the K3/0 Mini. The seller had warned us that all might be bad. Well, it turned out all of the RRC boxes were blown beyond repair, and we now know about the Mini. I would like to have the Mini at my Ohio QTH, so after the repair is completed at Elecraft Gary will ship it to me in Idaho, and I'll haul it to Ohio in January. I will cover all of the original \$500, the full cost of the repair, the cost of the shipping, and a bonus amount to the club treasury. I was a participant in the decision to take this gamble, so I should be the person to make the club whole and then some on that transaction. A good outcome for everybody, as these Minis are hard to find.

DL9SP Visits Signal Point

On Friday, November 10 we had a visit at the QTH from Stefan Plaga, DL9SP and his XYL Marlene. He met a sked with his father on 15 SSB and then went on to work down an ample European pileup.

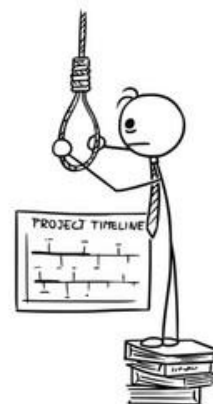


Stefan, DL9SP and his XYL Marlene, 10 November, 2023

Following his stint on the air, they went diving from the steps in our neighborhood, leaving their car in the safety of the Signal Point backyard.

Antenna Repair and Suicide

How could these possibly relate? Because I nearly committed hari kari on November 11 trying to fix an uncooperative antenna.



(Thanks VectorStock.com.)

The Europe 80 meter 3 element delta loop was reported inop when I arrived in October. As mentioned previously, just prior to the contest W4IPC, KG5XR and I went out to diagnose the problem and quickly found a broken wire at the feedpoint. The modular unit that contained a center insulator, an SO-239, and two pieces of #14 wire to connect the antenna had failed. One of the wires had broken irreperably, so that feedpoint assembly went into the trash. In rooting

around we found an unused homemade feedpoint pigtail with a PL-259 and short cable length, already weatherproofed, that looked to be perfect for our need. With only a couple hours left until I had to start setting up the network of computers for the contest, we hurriedly installed it, weatherproofed, and patted ourselves on the back for a good, expedient job.

But it didn't work. I was shocked to see that the SWR had gone from infinite to 5:1 across the whole band. Better, but not fixed. What the HECK?!

There was no more time to fuss with this, and we didn't need this antenna for the contest, so I tabled the repair and then finally resumed it on November 11. We had decided to take the day off and relax, but in usual Geoff fashion I felt guilty resting and decided to "take an hour" and fix that darned 80 antenna.

What I thought would be a "quick fix" took seven hours spanning two days. After lots of hot, sweaty, very frustrating work it is now working. Without dragging you through the detail, there were four things wrong! First, the feedpoint pigtail turned out to have a non-obvious intermittent somewhere such that the antenna came and went as the wind blew. Second, I found a coax barrel in the line that sometimes was OK and other times induced about 3:1 SWR. Third, there turned out to be another barrel at the outdoor hardline junction that had gone lossy and was introducing high SWR. Fourth, and MOST frustrating and difficult to find (and to believe), the 20 foot piece of quality RG-213 from the hardline up to the antenna feedpoint pigtail had gone sour. I swapped in a different jumper cable and presto, all good.

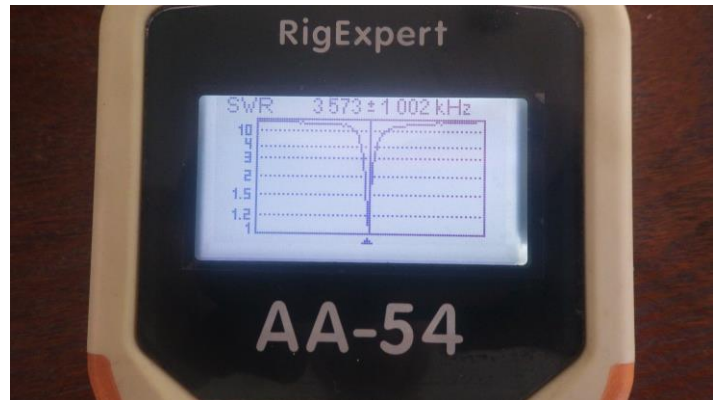
Needless to say, isolating and verifying all of that required hours and hours and many trips in and out, lots of checks with the AA-54, thoughtful elimination, and infinite patience. If I were a drinker I would have been totally sloshed at the end of this. Among other things, I had to fabricate an entirely new coax pigtail, put on some PL-259s, and re-seal everything against the weather.

Here's some of the pile (next column) of discarded parts.



Bad pigtail and two bad barrels. The 20 foot piece of faulty RG-213 is not shown.

Below, a healthy and happy antenna. It's centered right now at 3.555 and it quite narrow, as we prefer it. Clearly it's now apparent that we suffered a lightning induced surge that took out part of the feed system. After the fixes I tested extensively at high power, and all is good now.



Europe 80 3 element wire beam, fixed and happy

Repeat 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.

This Just In: Welcome New CCC Member KG5XC



Levi Stevens, KG5XC on 160, CQWW SSB 2023

A new page in CCC history, we are happy to welcome a new member who is 22 years old! Yes, you read that right. Levi is finishing up an EE degree at Mississippi State, will be joining the Navy after graduation, and has signed up with CCC. He was with us for the WW SSB contest, his first ever multi/multi experience, is young, fit, strong, very smart, and willing to climb and do all that's necessary to learn about the hobby. He's also a very fast contest operator and super knowledgeable in that he has been working part time as an amp repair tech at MFJ/Ameritron.

Levi grew up on his family's huge cotton farm in Mississippi, a story in itself. And he describes himself as being a bit luckier than most in his age range in that he has access to some resources, so CCC membership makes sense to him at this early time in his life. We're thrilled to welcome him to our family. You can say "Hi" at kg5xc@protonmail.com.

Curacao Days Gone By

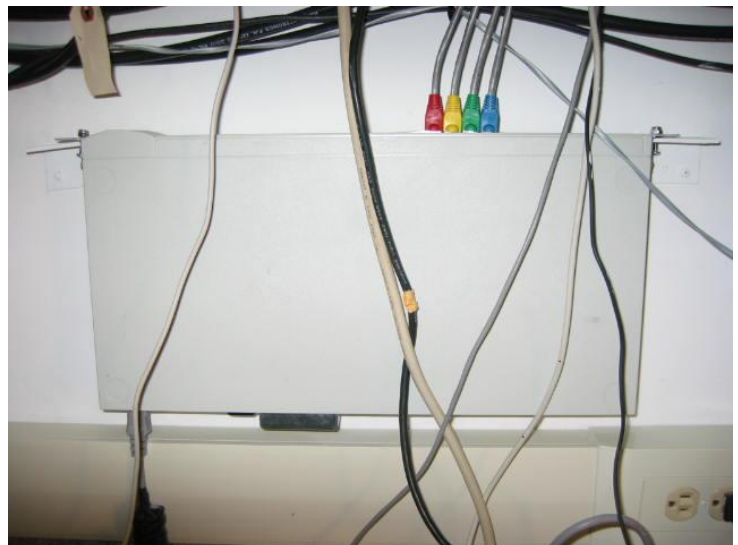
The old photos continue to receive good commentary. Here are some more, all from January, 2003.



For several years I preferred to sleep outside on the East Porch.



My daughter Amy helping to install radials on the 160 Inv L.



Simpler times, when the IP switch required only four ports!

