



Signals From The Point

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 Editor: W0CG

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Score Summary, CQ 160 CW Contest

Congratulations to CCC President Jeff, K8ND, on another apparent World #1 win, based on 3830 postings (below), in his assisted SOHP category in 160 CW. We very much missed having W8WTS here for this contest. As you know, Jim is dealing with a terrible family crisis, and he is uppermost in our thoughts.

CQ 160-Meter Contest, CW - 2023

Call: PJ2T
 Operator(s): K8ND
 Station: PJ2T

Class: Single Op Assisted HP
 QTH: Curacao
 Operating Time (hrs): 26

Summary:
 Total: QSOs = 1106 State/Prov = 58 Countries = 64
 Total Score = 1,339,194

Club: Mad River Radio Club

Single Op Assisted HP						
Call	OpMode	Remote	QSOs	State/Prov	Countries	Op. Time Score
PJ2T(K8ND)			1106	58	64	26 1,339,194
P33W(RA3AUU)			1143	40	70	28 1,243,220
P40AA(DL4MM)			1003	58	66	25h22 1,234,660
VE3EJ			1413	58	62	29.5 1,010,520
LY4A	SO2R		1315	43	81	30 974,516
9A5W(@9A1A)			1379	43	73	29.8 936,004
5N7Q(SP7GIQ)			1377	43	72	30 929,085
LX7I(DL3BPC)			1367	43	65	29:50 883,116
VA2WA			1232	58	60	26 880,162
5S0K			1245	39	70	30 771,066

KB7Q 23cm Moonbounce Operation as PJ2T



Earth Station PJ2T, February 2023 (photo KB7Q)

The Signal Point roof terrace hosted the first ever 23cm (1296 MHz) moonbounce operation from Curacao the week before the ARRL CW DX Contest. Gene and Joyce lugged the gear down from Montana easily, but thanks to PJ2BR's loan of his 1.8 meter folding dish they didn't have to bring the antenna. Operating under a coincidental full moon over four sessions as PJ2T Gene gave 45 folks a new country on this microwave band. Would you believe some folks actually have DXCC on 23cm?

The station was a 1.8M metallicized fabric covered folding dish with a manual az/el mount made from 1/4" aluminum plate, Icom 9700 radio, state of the art WD5AGO preamp, 500 watt semi-homebrew power amp, and lots of cables.

It was a pleasure to get the PJ2T call sign out there on yet another band. This makes the fourth band KB7Q has done moonbounce from Signal Point.



PJ2VR, PJ2BR, PJ2/KB7Q, and PJ2DX finishing dinner prior to the moonbounce operation, February 7, 2023 (photo W0CG)



The IC-9700, kit-built 500 watt amp, and Gene's PC



Expedient hand sledge hammer counterweight on the 1296 dish (photo W0CG). Note the elevation display.



The historic first eight 1296 MHz EME QSOs from PJ2

K3(1) Arrived Signal Point

Here's the arrival (below) in Ohio of the repaired K3(1) from our inventory. N7IR fixed this radio when it entirely quit making RF in November. As always, we are very grateful to Gary for all he does for the group as Station Equipment Lead. The K3 is in the box on the left, and the other, shipped to me by KB7Q, is our newest PC, a spare RRC host box, and lots of cables to install the RRC box at the enhanced remote.



KB7Q's shining UHF brilliance, with three spectators (photo Dorothy)



K3(1) and a new (refurbished) PC, Ohio, January 2023

This is a lot of work for Gary and Gene to get this stuff together, box it up, and ship it. One more example of

the ever-moving parts and processes that make it possible for you to arrive at PJ2T and find the stations fully equipped, well maintained, and ready to go.

Update on Enhanced Remote

As you know from the E-mails, we collectively decided to move away from the RCFORBS remoting scheme and return to the RRC boxes. RCFORBS was about 85% good enough, but there were too many instances of choppy and chirpy CW and criticism of poor audio on SSB.

I did the conversion at Signal Point in late January. This required adding more Ethernet cabling from the IP switch to the remote station, recabling some stuff to connect the RRC box, and software configuration done with close guidance from Gene. We also added redundant fail-safe power control to the remote that's accessible only to the system administrators. This may enable us to recover remotely from what might otherwise be an unrecoverable situation.

The RRC-based setup is working fabulously, with no more reports of broken CW, chirps, or poor audio on SSB.

Remote Usage Resumes

As soon as the RRC conversion was finished, users got back on the air via the remote station. The primary user was our newest member, K5PI, who ran 66.34 hours on the remote station in January (article from him later). Thanks K8ND for compiling that usage data.

Roster of CCC Remote Operators

Here's the latest list of CCC ops who have remitted the calendar year 2023 remote operation fee of \$200.

NA2U, W8WTS, N7WA, KE3VV, K8ND, K5PI, N7NR, W0CG, SM4KYN, KB7Q, W9NJY, DL8OBQ, W5MJ, and WI9WI. These funds will be directed almost exclusively to supporting the Aqualectra utility bills, which average about \$500/month. Operators who participate in contests via the remote will contribute additional funds on top of the \$200 flat amount. All of this is a help to the increasingly underfunded activities of the club, and will help us to continue to have the big fun going forward.

Update on Preparation for ARRL DX CW Contest

The contest is this coming weekend. KB7Q and WI9WI have already been on site for a week. We'll

also have ironman operator Rudy (NF9V), Andy (W9NJY), Gary (N7IR), and Randy (K7TQ). Randy is president of the Spokane DX Associatio, my local club, and was able to arrange to join this team on short notice.

The current plan, subject to last minute change, is that the enhanced remote station will serve as the 160 meter station, manned by W8WTS, N7NR, and K8ND. We'll use the Hamachi VPN to support the wide area N1MM log.

We're very sad that Bill (W9VA) won't be on site, as he is battling a medical problem. Bill has been a stalwart participant in this contest since the beginning of CCC. We look forward to logging him on six bands from his home station in Riverwoods, IL.

WI9WI Piloted PJ2T in WPX RTTY

As in many past years, WI9WI and Annette came a week early to Signal Point so as to run a single op in the WPX RTTY contest. Jim does this for fun, part time, and yet still always manages to post an excellent score.



Dr. Jim Fitzpatrick (WI9WI) running great rates on 10 in WPX RTTY, Saturday, February 11, 2023

Call: **PJ2T**
Operator(s): **WI9WI**
Station: PJ2T

Class: **SOAB HP**
Class Overlay: **Classic**
QTH: Signal Point Curacao
Operating Time (hrs): 20
Location: South America

Summary:

Band	QSOs
80:	0
40:	316
20:	239

15: 481

10: 456

Total: **1492** Prefixes **587** Total Score **3,153,364**

PJ2T Remoting Experience, by K5PI

It's good to be the DX! If you haven't tried the PJ2T remote, you don't know what you're missing. As the old jingle used to go, "It's almost like being there!"

I'm a brand new member of the club (first PJ2T operation 2022 CQWW CW), and I've been using the remote almost daily for about a month. To date, I've made almost 5000 Qs via remote. I'm very much a CW kind of guy, but I'm working with Gene and Geoff to figure out FT8/FT4 as well.

The remote has been much more available than I imagined. With a couple dozen club members, I imagined it might be hard to get "seat time". Not so! Most of the time, I find the remote is available. I've usually done 1-2 hour sessions. That seems to be about enough time to work through a pileup on a given band. But I do take a peek at Slack from time to time to see if anyone else wants to get on. Don't be shy, especially if you have a limited window of opportunity.

Ten meters has just been incredible in recent weeks! A couple days ago, I had an EU pileup that took a couple hours to work through at 150-200/hour. The JAs have been very keen to work PJ2 on 10M as well. I tap the NR (DSP) button and try to pull out the really weak ones. I've gotten a handful of cards from buddy-pole-on-the-balcony guys who worked me for an all time new one.

The WARC bands have been fun, too. PJ2T has had a huge presence on the contest bands, but there are lots of eager folks on 12, 17, and 30. FYI, the 200W power limit DOES apply to 30M, just as in the US. I just run the radio barefoot at 100W. (I asked about 60M, but I understand that the Curacao "FCC" hasn't given a definitive yes to that as yet.)

I've been having fun on 80M, too. I figured that the PJ2T 160 contest operations helped satisfy a lot of customers on Top Band, so I focused on 80 and found some nice pileups. The 80M Ridge antenna is terrific. (To be honest, I haven't really tried the wire beams in the yard yet.) Both beverages are available on the remote, which of course makes life on the low bands MUCH better.

It's been interesting to operate on some unusual band-times, too. 20M has been great around midnight Texas time. The sun is just up in Russia, so Zone 16 is loud on the ridge tribander. Other Eastern Europe early birds are in there, and Japan is workable too.

I haven't done a lot of 40M yet, but was on a couple evenings ago and a JA called me at 0218Z. That's almost noon in Tokyo!

I've worked 40-60 countries already on 10-40 meters so am well on my way to 5BDXCC. I haven't gotten any cards yet from the bureau, but I may need to send my sorter (an old friend of mine) a bottle of scotch for all he'll be doing for me. ☺

Gene's remote manual

(https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ce9ZU2DM7jbV-dNtdeepxpRirZIATCdN/view?usp=share_link) is great. Be sure you have the latest version. Look for a "pinned document" in Slack or on the AnyDesk desktop of the remote computer. If you haven't jumped in yet, here's a little background/embellishment for his how-to document.

The PJ2T remote was recently switched to RemoteRig. This solution requires some hardware at the operator side, but once it's configured, it's really quite simple to use. A RemoteRig RRC-1258 MKII control box is required. Unfortunately, these aren't currently available in the US, but can be had on the used market. I understand that it's likely they will re-appear for sale again from the US vendor (HRO) when the Swedish manufacturer can get parts again. These are very versatile boxes that work with most radios. It's possible to configure them with multiple profiles for connection to several remote stations.

For the PJ2T remote, you also need one of three types of an Elecraft "radio" to provide the knobs and buttons.

- An Elecraft K3 can be used in "terminal mode" with a null modem serial cable. A long press on the MENU button puts the K3 into terminal mode.
- An Elecraft K3/0 can also be used. This is a full sized box like the K3, but it has no transmitter or receiver, just knobs, buttons, a serial port, headphone jack and the electronics to support them.
- An Elecraft K3/0-Mini provides just a K3 front panel (a bit like the KX3) and is a bit more elegant when it comes to cabling.

The RemoteRig setup works VERY well on CW, in large part because the WinKey is in Curacao. That prevents the timing from getting mangled in transit. Paddles are easy to use, too, with a speed control on the RemoteRig box.

I understand that SSB works very well also. It's very much like making a Skype call to the radio. Note that VOX is not supported for the PJ2T remote, so you'll need to wire up a footswitch.

N1MM works great. Gene's document provides detail on how to set it up so that you can run N1MM on your own computer. For remote contest operations, however, it may be best to run N1MM on the Curacao computer. That eliminates the complication of having to replicate the log among several operators' computers. (We also use the Hamachi VPN solution for group contests involving the remote. -Ed.)

Digital modes are being researched. While it's possible to do digital with the microphone input and speaker output, this isn't ideal for ensuring a clean signal. It goes without saying that digital modes are much higher duty cycle so lower power should be used.

A few words about the previous remote solution, RCForb (www.remotehams.com).

RCForb can work with just a computer at the operator end, but it does support some hardware like the K3/0-Mini that provides a "real radio" experience with knobs and buttons. I first operated just using a computer. That worked, but it was tough to manage a PJ2 pileup without knobs for adjusting your split, RF gain, etc. Once I figured out to hook up a K3 as a control unit, it got a lot easier. If you just want to put a toe in the water, you should try RCForb! Just download the free software, upload a JPG of your license, and try connecting to some of the publicly advertised stations worldwide.

You'll find that most of these are club stations for member use only, but there are some that will let you use the receiver without membership. There are also some that will allow transmit privileges by request, although these tend to be modest stations. The W8RJ station is a notable exception. This station is run by the principal RCForb support guy, and he makes his K4 and KPA1500 available to all who ask! I'm not sure what kind of antenna he has, but he gets out pretty well. I've used his station to work a few new band-countries and have even used it occasionally in the

CWT contests. All public stations are well, public, so etiquette like you might use on a VHF repeater applies.

What's in the Mail Lately?

I was surprised to find this plaque in the Idaho mail pile upon returning home in December. It's a World #1 winning plaque for "Contest Expedition," WPX SSB, 2022, score 31.8M.



Date of photo December 16, 2022

This plaque is now on the wall near the kitchen stove at Signal Point.

Update on ARRL SSB Contest

Once again this contest will be manned by the PCARS Melbourne, Florida club group, led by our very long time CCC member Dan, N1ZZ. They include Walter K5LD (CCC member), Vince K4JC (CCC member), Don AF4Z, Chuck AD4ES, Dave KE3VV (CCC member), Ryan N0OJ, and Steve AK4R. CCC member K8PGJ and I will also be on this team. They booked an extra-long trip, arriving three days early and spending 10 total nights on site at Signal Point and the Moran pool house.

K5LD and K4JC will be activating two parks on the island that will be first-time activations in the POTA program. Look for Christoffel Park and Shete Boka Park to be creating huge pileups in early March.

Update on WPX SSB Contest

With no interest shown from within the CCC group, I made an overture to my home club, the Spokane DX Association, to see if we could raise a team and do an entire contest with just SDXA members. We were fortunate to be able to recruit AD7XG + Svetlana, AC7DC, and WA7CPA. But that was not enough for a full crew, so we recruited outside of CCC and SDXA and managed to assemble an excellent team which now

consists of WA7CPA, AD7XG + Svetlana, AC7DC, KC7EFP + Jenny, N5BR, W5WZ, and WM5H. With XYLs accompanying, we have filled every available bed for WPX SSB.

Celebrities Hung (huh?) in West Bedroom

For many years, many years ago, Jerry (WB9Z) and his ex-wife Lori stayed at Signal Point several weeks over the Christmas season. Jerry became a CCC member, and in that time was very involved with me here on projects and contest operations. We became the best of friends based on respect for each other's over the top work ethic and basic courtesy and kindness.

Jerry's marriage split up about the same time mine did and, like me, he was fortunate to find an incredible new gal who is, as you all know, Valarie Hotzfeld, NV9L. They are contesting's power couple and were featured on the cover of *CQ* a couple of years ago.

Dorothy and I were fortunate to get them to autograph that cover one day when we passed through Crescent City, and that signed cover is now framed and on the wall at Signal Point. Jerry has continued over the years to be very generous in supporting the PJ2T adventure, and we owe him an ongoing big thank you.



Dorothy with Val and Jerry hanging around in the West Bedroom

Some Words About Clublog, by K5PI

Clublog provides a lot of great features. If you've never looked at it, take some time to explore at www.clublog.org.

One of its functions is to act as an unofficial Logbook of the World. You may have checked to see if you made it into the latest DXpedition's log with the Log Search function. With a simple utility, you can be like

the big boys and provide real time log searching for the guys you work.

<https://clublog.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/3000093504>



G7VZR's utility that runs quietly in the background, listening for the networking messages generated by N1MM (and other programs). It creates a small database, logs onto your Clublog account, and uploads QSOs automatically. I've been using it for a couple weeks and it's been working very well.

The instructions are pretty good but I'll provide a little recap and detail. These assume you're running it on a Windows PC.

If you haven't already, create a Clublog account and upload an ADIF of your log.

Create an "application password" in Clublog. <https://clublog.org/edituser.php?tab=6>

Write a simple batch file to launch the utility. I named mine "clublog.bat" and included this command (remove the < > and insert your info).

The 127.0.0.1 is a magic IP address that refers to the local computer.

```
clublog-gateway-windows_amd64.exe -mode=listener  
-ip=127.0.0.1 -callsign=<yourcall> -password=<your  
app password> -rate=10
```

Go to N1MM, Configure Ports ..., and select the Broadcast Data tab. Check the box that says Contacts. Leave the IP address as 127.0.0.1:12060.

Launch the batch file, and a command line window will open. Leave it open as long as you are operating. As you log a QSO in N1MM, you can see the callsign as soon as you log it in N1MM. A few seconds later, you'll see a message that it has been uploaded.

PJ2T Guy Wire Maintenance

In late January we replaced a bad deadend on one of the US/JA tower guys. This was the middle guy that is anchored behind the East Sunroom. The deadend between the bottom end of the Phillystran and the steel guy tail was blossoming rust through the sealing tape, and it was clear that this guy grip was headed for

failure. Following the usual four day process, we put on a temporary guy, removed the bad one, trashed the rusty deadend, and put on a new Big Grip. The next step was to prime that grip with epoxy and wait 24 hours for it to cure. Following a second coat of epoxy and 24 more hours of curing time, we reinstalled all of the waterproofing, and the next day reinstalled and tensioned the guy. One day later, after gaining confidence in the new guy under tension, I removed the temporary one. Job done, a lot of steps, but now this will be good for another 20+ years.

Regrettably, there was more guy wire work to do. We noticed a rust bloom coming through the tape-covered deadend on the southeast middle guy from the Europe Tower. K8ND captured this photo from the ground with a gigantic lens. This photo made it obvious that encroaching tree branches had damaged the tape seal, admitted and trapped moisture, and allowed serious rust to form. For years I had been progressively cutting these branches away from the guys, but there were limits to what I could reach. Thus, one of the planned projects for this trip was to get a professional to trim back this tree.



Damaged guy wire waterproofing from tree abrasion

Hence, on Tuesday, February 7, Geoff attached a temporary guy at the 66 foot point on the Europe

tower, tensioned it, and removed the damaged guy wire.

It was worse than this photo shows – the deadend crumbled into rusty flakes in my hand, leaving the guy grip completely gone around the full circumference of the Phillystran (photo).



This severely damaged Philly big grip completely crumbled apart in my hand.

We used the following three days to do the sequence of cleaning, reinstall, prime, paint, re-waterproof, and re-install that guy, finishing it on Saturday, February 11.

Meanwhile, Geoff went back up the tree to cut away what he could reach. The photo shows me hacking away too high and too much off balance in this tall tree.



February 6, 2023, W0CG trimming tree branches

Unfortunately, I could not get high enough in the tree to reach more guy-wire-eating branches with a hand saw, so on the 8th we brought in someone more capable. Zoom's brother, Wingel Wawoe, climbed the tree barefoot with a chainsaw, going much higher than was really safe, and with massive body strength cut out the worrisome branches with one hand, full extension, handling the chainsaw. Here's the result.



Guy-wire-eating tree parts now no threat

Some of these tree parts were so heavy that it took two of us to drag them to the trash pile. The Europe Tower southeast guys are now in the clear, and we paid him much less than a professional tree service would have charged.

CCCs Here and There

Dorothy arrived in Cleveland late on the afternoon of January 21. I whisked her directly from the airport to the K8AZ QTH and Tom's annual open house party. This was lucky timing, and the first time I have been able to attend that gathering of top Northeast Ohio contesters for over 20 years.

CCC members W8WTS, ND8L, and K8IV were in attendance, and we had a great pizza fest and a chance to catch up with many locals I had not seen for years since I moved to Idaho.



CCC Treasurer Jim, W8WTS with DX Engineering's Ed, K8IV, January 21, 2023



Dorothy in the Captain's seat at the K8AZ mega-station, with W8WTS

Routine Maintenance, As Always, at Signal Point

Here's some precautionary maintenance we did on February 6. It is much cheaper to get a septic tank pumped here than in the States. With the present light use of Signal Point, we should not need to do this again for several years.



Monday, February 6



Dorothy's doing preventive maintenance on one of the bedspreads from the West Bedroom. Some of the stitching is coming out.



Dorothy re-screening the main entry door

The cat that knew how to chew a hole in this screen material has now departed from Signal Point. The new cats aren't as clever, so we finally replaced that screen on the main door.

Thanks DL8OBQ for 3CX1200A7 Tube

Uli managed to find what appears to be a nearly new tube for the AL-1200s. He will bring it to the station in July and is only asking for forgiveness of the \$200 Year 2023 remoting access fee, a great deal for CCC. Thanks Uli, and if anyone has access to more of these tubes, we want them!



End of Month Balance

At the end of January the balance in the Station Support fund was \$4401.84.

Long Term PJ2T Wish List

- Diesel generator
- Manual AC power transfer switch
- More 3CX1200A7 tubes.

Strays from W0CG

Here are two vividly contrasting photos. The first shows the limited extent of my ham radio life in Idaho – the remote station in my home office that serves as a front end to the PJ2T super-station on the far end of the “wire.” So little equipment to access so much capability.

The bottom photo is some of my skyhooks at the W0CG station in Suffield, Ohio. I'm on 8 acres at the second highest point in the county. The tower on the left is 140 feet of Rohn 45 with 2 el for 40 at 147 feet, another 40 2 el at 70 feet, and other antennas for 20 in the works. To the right is 120 ft of Rohn 45 with 3 high stacks for 15 and 10 and several VHF antennas. Barely visible is 80 feet of Rohn 25 supporting a WARC beam, six elements on six, and many wires. One very tiny station footprint in Idaho; a much larger footprint in Ohio.



W0CG remote station, Coeur d Alene, Idaho



W0CG antennas in Suffield, Ohio, January 19, 2023

