



# Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium  
Editor: W0CG

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## The Season in Review – What a Year for PJ2T: 61,198 Contest QSOs

### CQWW SSB: World # 1; Most QSOs in World

Band	QSOs	Zones	Countries
160:	232	15	30
80:	994	23	86
40:	2750	30	121
20:	3566	38	132
15:	4071	34	117
10:	4521	34	123
Total:	16134	174	609
Total Score	36,959,949		

### CQWW CW: World # 3; Top in Western Hemisphere

160:	589	18	67
80:	1493	30	97
40:	3309	33	121
20:	3193	38	127
15:	3578	37	127
10:	2284	33	111
Total:	14446	189	650
Total Score	35,776,638		

### CQ 160 CW: World # 1 SOHP (A)

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

### ARRL DX CW: World # 1

Band	QSOs	Mults
160:	438	48
80:	10933	57
40:	1742	59
20:	1781	60
15:	2151	59
10:	2146	61
Total:	9291	344

Total Score 9,588,312

### ARRL DX SSB: World # 1; Most QSOs in World

Band	QSOs	Mults
160:	187	41
80:	729	55
40:	2151	61
20:	2465	61
15:	3148	60
10:	3095	61
Total:	11775	339
Total Score	11,967,039	

### CQ WPX SSB: World # 3

160:	5		
80:	388		
40:	1056		
20:	1724		
15:	2542		
10:	2498		
Total:	8213	Prefixes	1415
Total Score	40,030,350		

As is the case every year, WI9WI is planning to pilot PJ2T in WPX CW, wrapping up our season of competition. Best of luck to Jim!

## Welcome New CCC Member Bobby Baker, WM5H

We welcome Bobby Baker, WM5H, to CCC membership. Bobby was part of the WPX SSB crew in late March, joining that team at the behest of his good friend and neighbor Scott, W5WZ. After hearing about the CCC setup and organization, Bobby immediately said that he would like to support what we're doing, whether he ever were to contest here again or not. We hope, of course, that he will be back to Signal Point, and in the meantime much appreciate his support. He's

setting up for remote operation and will be active as a PJ2 from afar.

Bobby spent his career as a police officer in West Munroe, Louisiana, and is now enjoying the safety and relaxation of retirement. You can welcome him to our PJ2 family at [wm5h@w5wz.com](mailto:wm5h@w5wz.com).



Bobby Baker, WM5H, March 26, 2023

### Report on WPX SSB Contest

Nobody from the CCC membership wanted to come for this contest, after numerous inquiries. This continues to reflect our club's preference for CW. Thus, I decided to try to make this a contesting outing for my local club, the Spokane DX Association. Three members, AD7XG, WA7CPA, and AC7DC signed on, but that was not enough people for a multi/multi, nor to support the expensive rental house.

With a lot of help from our membership, we fanned out invitations to various contest clubs and were fortunate to build a team. In addition to the SDXA members listed above, we welcomed W5WZ (Scott), WM5H (Bobby), James (KC7EFP) and Cal (N5BR). Those seven ops were supplemented by N7NR and N7WA via the remote, and it was game on.

I had billed this operation as an opportunity for new and aspiring contesters to be able to operate side by side with experts, and to view it as a learning opportunity. That worked out well, and the average knowledge and skill level of the team was significantly elevated by this experience.

We were unlucky with conditions, as you can see from this spaceweather.com excerpt.

**SEVERE GEOMAGNETIC STORM:** Forecasters did not see this one coming. On March 23-24, auroras spread into the United States as far south as [New Mexico](#) (+32.8N) during a severe (category [G4](#)) geomagnetic storm--the most intense in nearly 6 years. The cause of the storm is still unclear; it may have been the ripple effect of a near-miss CME on March 23rd.

The Spokane club had set up a competition where SDXA members worked their counterparts in Curacao for recognition and a modest reward. The rotten conditions prior to the contest thwarted some of that activity, but everyone still had fun.

The poor conditions spilled over onto the contest weekend, with the low bands being particularly tough when the A index reached 66. Conditions to Europe on the high bands were very uneven, and we struggled all weekend. Everyone in the contest faced these same challenges, though, and we managed to post this claimed score.

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160:	5		
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Prefixes	1415	Total Score	40,030,350

As expected, our competition in CN, Zone 33, absolutely killed this contest with an fabulous claimed score of 106.6M.

The PJ2T remote station has reached maturity, and is now so reliable that N7NR opened the first two hours of the contest via the remote. Dave ran off 352 contacts in those first two hours, cementing the concept of wide-area logging and remote shift operators in PJ2T contests. We will surely be doing more of this. Dink, N7WA, also took some shifts via the remote, patiently handling slow rate times because of his scheduling constraints at home.

I owe a huge debt to these ops who enabled us to once again to achieve a big PJ2T presence on the bands.



Scott, W5WZ running hot rates on 10 as NU3O, a new licensee, listens in total amazement.



James, KC7EFP, an extremely proficient operator, mixing Europe and US contacts Saturday on 10.



Cal, N5BR, patiently and expertly slogging out slow rates on 20 Saturday morning.



Jay, AC7DC harvesting lots of points on 40. (Guess who is his favorite band. Hint: It's not 10 through 160.)

It's interesting to note in this photo that the 15 meter chair behind Jay is empty. That's because the 15 meter op at that time, N7NR, was in his own chair in California. Remote contesting works!



Running super Europe rates on 15, Robin, WA7CPA

### **2023 CQWW 160-Meter CW Contest by Jeff K8ND/PJ2ND**

The 2023 CQWW 160-Meter CW Contest at the Signal Point PJ2T station was the 17<sup>th</sup> using the PJ2T callsign. In 2005, Geoff W0CG operated only one night of the contest, and placed #5 in the World Single-Op High Power!

I had a long interest in Topband, having been introduced to the ARRL 160-Meter Contest in college at the W8LT station. But I had not been a regular competitor in the CQ 160 contests. In 2006, I decided to try the contest from Curacao, and operated the station to a #2 World finish in SOHP.

The next year, a tradition of Multi-Operator efforts started, with W8WTS and K8ND finishing #2 in the World. The two of us have done a total of 12 Multi-Op outings, finishing #1 four times, #2 twice, and #3 four

times. Every PJ2T Multi-op finish has been in the Top Five of the contest!

In those years when Jim W8WTS could not participate, I operated as a single operator. In 2012, I finished #1 Single-Op High Power (Assisted), and set a South America record, which stood until 2020. The next year, in 2013 I finished #1 World in Single Operator High Power (unassisted), setting a new South America record in that category that still stands.

From 2014 to 2022, W8WTS and K8ND did eight (8) Multi-Ops, missing only the pandemic year of 2021. In 2022, we came back strong, finishing #1 World Multi-Op.

CQWW 160-Meter Contest CW  
PJ2T Previous Results

YEAR	SCORE	QSOs	STATES/ PROVINCE	DXCC	TOTAL MULTS	FINISH	OP(s)	NOTES
2023	1,330,194	1106	58	64	122	#1 World SCHP Assisted (?)	K8ND	<< Claimed Score >>
2022	1,458,816	1150	57	71	128	#1 Multi-Op World	W8WTS, K8ND	
2021								(No PJ2T Operation)
2020	2,141,644	1519	57	85	142	#5 Multi-Op World	W8WTS, K8ND	South America Record (Current)
2019	1,701,310	1319	57	73	130	#2 Multi-Op World	W8WTS, K8ND	
2018	1,580,871	1198	59	74	133	#3 Multi-Op World	W8WTS, K8ND	
2017	1,792,342	1360	56	73	131	#2 Multi-Op World	W8WTS, K8ND	
2016	1,442,974	1146	59	66	127	#1 Multi-Op World	W8WTS, K8ND	
2015	1,014,762	925	56	55	111	#1 Multi-Op World	W8WTS, K8ND	
2014	1,517,298	1185	58	71	129	#1 Multi-Op World	W8WTS, K8ND	
2013	1,635,625	1361	58	67	125	#1 SOHP World	K8ND	South America Record (Current)
2012	1,443,260	1231	56	64	122	#1 SOHP Assisted World	K8ND	Previous South America Record (until 2020)
2011	1,865,025	1400	59	76	136	#3 Multi-Op World	W8WTS, K8ND	
2010	1,738,500	1250	57	85	142	#3 Multi-Op World	W8WTS, K8ND	
2009	2,065,700	1497	57	83	140	#3 Multi-Op World	W8WTS, K8ND	
2008								(No PJ2T Operation)
2007	2,047,680	1516	58	78	136	#2 Multi-Op World	W8WTS, K8ND	
2006	1,303,965	1110	59	58	117	#2 SOHP World	K8ND	
2005	837,073	669	56	53	109	#5 SOHP World	W0CG	

K8nd 230213a  
There were FOUR single-operator operations by K8ND since 2006, and no operations in 2008 and 2021. All the others were Multi-Op with W8WTS and K8ND.

For 2023, Jim was unable to join me, so once again I was to do a Single-Operator effort. I was scheduled to arrive January 9, having purchased my tickets in October. As my departure date arrived, it became clear that my old 1959-vintage furnace was experiencing ‘death rattles’, and could not be trusted to last throughout the period of my stay on the island. So, I was forced to delay my departure while a new furnace was obtained and installed.

Finally arriving January 17, I was surprised to see the amount of new growth on the island, including in the ‘flats’, that area between PJ2T and the former hotel site where we usually deploy the DX Engineering 4-square receiving array. Recent months of heavy rain have resulted in waist-high growth, obscuring the usual landmarks and ‘bare’ areas. The plan before the week-long furnace delay was that I would place the four antenna bases and deploy the radials before W0CG arrived to complete the installation. My stamina not yet completely restored after my multiple hospital stays, I was going to undertake my part slowly and over several days in the 2 weeks before Geoff and Dorothy arrived January 24.

After hauling out the cement-bucket antenna bases out to the area, and viewing the growth in the area, I decided that it was impractical for one person to wade through the wabi, properly measure the positions for the four bases and spread radials under the four whips. I’m not skilled with the PJ2T machete, so clearing the area was not an option! So I made the decision to operate the 160-meter contest without the 4-square.

I set up the CW Skimmer system, one on each of the two Beverages. We’ve been using CW Skimmers with SDR-IQ receivers since 2008. They provide an invaluable stream of spots to the N1MM bandmap during the contest, adding to those from the PJ2A Skimmer Server and the PacketCluster via node W8WTS-3. The plan was also to use the Ridge 80-meter inv-V as a third RX antenna, also connected to a CW Skimmer.

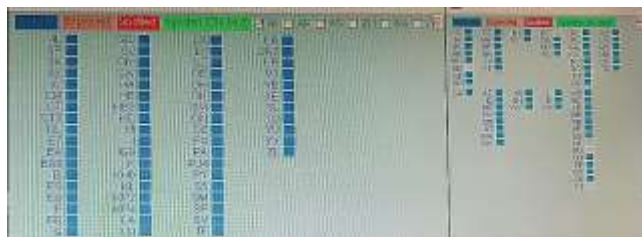
We ‘discovered’ the great benefits of diversity receiving with the K3 a few years ago, and have been setting it up for the contest since. In the past, the 4-square was used as the second antenna for diversity, but that wasn’t an option this year, so I configured it to use the Ridge 80-meter Inv-V. Unfortunately, that antenna proved to be insufficiently sensitive and ineffective on 160m, and so the diversity configuration was abandoned.

As the contest approached, I considered whether to turn off the skimmer system and links to the PacketCluster and operate as SOHP (unassisted). As a unique multiplier, ‘If you CQ, they will come’. However, my old South America record in that category still stands, and there was nothing to gain there. So I decided to operate as Single-Op High Power (Assisted).

Unlike in the high-population-density areas (North America, Europe), on Curacao there is no point in spending time on the band during daylight, so I started CQing at around 2230Z. As usual, the contest started slowly. The North Americans were working North Americans. The Europeans were working Europeans. No one was looking to hear stations elsewhere! Eventually, as the Sun set over the USA East Coast, QSOs started trickling in, with the first few Europeans (CS2C, DR4A, I2WIJ, DR5X) before the first of the North Americans as the Sun set over the East Coast at about 2300Z. Things picked up from there, with the first five full hours having rates of 57, 95, 99, 99, and 101. Rates went down from there. The first night total was 754 QSOs, about 10 more QSOs than our Multi-Op amount in the previous year.

The second night, rates are always much lower, peaking at 62 in the 0400Z hour. 352 QSOs added in the second night, for a total for the contest of 1106 QSOs.

Final claimed score: 1,339,194 points, 1106 QSOs, 58 States & Provinces (missing ND, DC, and the uncommon Canadians), and 64 DXCC countries. The multipliers are shown below.



The 3830 page shows this as a 1<sup>st</sup> World finish in the Single Op High Power (Assisted) category! Of course, it is possible that some station with a large score has not posted to 3830, so the finish is not final until the article is published in CQ Magazine.

**Single Op Assisted HP**

Call	OpMode	Remote	QSOs	State/Prov	Countries	Op Time	Score	Club
PJ2T(K8ND)			1106	58	64	26	1,339,194	MRRRC
P33W(RA3AUU)			1143	40	70	28	1,243,220	
P40AA(DL4MM)			1003	58	66	25h22	1,234,668	BCC
VE3EJ			1413	58	62	29.5	1,010,520	CCO

**Protective Sheath Applied to Fiber Drop**

It seems like a small thing, but every incremental measure we can take to make us more secure is worth it. The photo (next column) shows the phone pole across the street where our fiber (and the next door neighbor’s fiber) drop down below ground.



Signal Point fiber (black at the top) protected by grey and orange conduits.

At most of the homes in the neighborhood the installers ran protective orange conduit only about four feet up the pole, leaving the balance of the fiber very vulnerable to a bad guy’s wire cutters. One snip, and it’s bye bye security system and surveillance cameras.

I persuaded the installers to run our conduit much higher. It’s orange in the photo. But I was still not quite satisfied because a guy with a pickup truck could put a stepladder in the bed and reach up and cut our fiber. Thus, on March 16 Dorothy and Mike Maley and I used Mike’s extension ladder to add about seven more feet of protective sheath to our two fiber drops. With the ladder at maximum extension I still could not quite reach the top, and the extremely precarious position made it impossible to get the additional sheath perfectly straight. But it is now much more difficult for

a vandal or thief to reach and cut our protected fiber drop. The other houses in the neighborhood are much softer targets.

### Welcome CCC New Member N00J

Ryan Dahlberg, N00J, is our second newest CCC member, having decided to sign up with us after his experience here in the ARRL SSB contest.



Ryan Dahlberg, N00J, operating in ARRL SSB 2023

Ryan hails from a farm on the windswept high Colorado prairie, growing up there in the cold and wind in that ferocious place east of that big wall of rock in Central Colorado.

He recently relocated to Melbourne in East Central Florida and signed on as a member of N1ZZ's PCARS club. Dan invited Ryan to Curacao last year, but the scheduling did not work. This year he made it to PJ2T, enjoyed the trip, and opted immediately to become a member of CCC.

He's good at *everything*, is the sort of person who will always drop what he's doing to pitch in and help out, and is a highly proficient contest operator. And living in Florida, it is very much easier for him to get to Curacao than most of the rest of us. At 43 he has arithmetically pulled down the average age of our CCC membership significantly.

In real life N00J is a Frontier Airbus A319/20/21 Captain, having worked his way into the left seat the hard way rather than via military training. That means years of paying dues in lousy low-paying flying jobs here and there, such as a stint in Montana flying the Beech 1900. Ryan is living my career dream, and he has been remarkably patient answering my endless questions about the airplane and flying the line for a major.

We welcome him to the CCC family and hope to see him on the island many times for many years going forward.

### Nocturnal Varnishing!

The motor-driven front gate at Signal Point requires a coat of varnish approximately every 18 months. The south side weathers particularly fast because it gets intense direct sunlight all day. Without this maintenance the beautiful mahogany gate would have been trash 15 years ago.

I've experimented with many different coatings and treatments over the years, and by far the best result is obtained with this Lenmar spar varnish (below). Nothing else comes close. The downside is that a gallon is \$159.43 at Kooyman. Yes, that's dollars, not guilders.



Lenmar Spar Varnish, the BEST, at \$159.43/gallon

The varnishing has to be done at night because the direct daylight sun bubbles the varnish, cures it much too fast, and grass bits and bugs blow onto the surface and ruin the job. Thus my long standing routine has

been to get up at about 1:00 AM once the air and the wood have cooled down, and do the varnishing under the lights.

The photo shows the finished coat at about 3:00 AM on the morning of March 9. By the time the sun comes up and hits this gate, it has had about five hours to set up, resulting in a much better job than doing it in the sunlight. One more work item ticked off the work list.



Gate varnish applied in wee hours of the night March 9

### Great Gift from K4JC

Vince has donated this beautiful Eton Elite Executive general coverage receiver to PJ2T.



Eton general coverage receiver from K4JC

This battery operated gem will be of great help in sniffing out sources of electrical noise around the neighborhood. It's also FUN to sit in the Ocean Pavilion and listen to the contest activity. This is a wonderful generous gift, one of many from K4JC. Thanks!

### Thanks K8ND for GPS Receiver Loan

Jeff has loaned a Garmin GPSmap 62st to the station. This portable hand-held device will make it much easier to correctly install RX antennas on the Ridge and in the flats. It has already proven its worth when

Jeff coached me on how to input waypoints while walking the US/JA Ridge Beverage. We found the first 250 feet or so to be terribly crooked, and in February K7TQ, KB7Q and I straightened it out. Thanks Jeff for the use of this asset!

### Six Meter Beam Inop



Six perfectly resonant at, oops, 45.6 MHz. March 19, 2023.

The remote station has made the six meter yagi more accessible than before, and several of our ops have tried to operate six remotely. This led to the discovery that the SWR was looking bad.

My first thought was that an area of visible corrosion in the feedline junction on the back porch was the culprit. The RG-8/U type cable had literally corroded to a near open shield. On March 19 I took that mess apart and put the meter on the line looking up toward the antenna. To my vast disappointment this showed (photo) that the antenna is somehow resonant at 45.6 MHz. Too bad 7 meters is not a ham band. There are no dips anywhere between 50.0 and 54.0 MHz. This antenna used to be perfect, so some sleuthing is required. Nothing appears to have fallen off the antenna, so the hardline is the next suspect.

I ran out of time this trip with the WPX SSB team arriving, followed soon after by our departure from the island. This six meter project will have to wait until fall season, and if it requires taking down the beam I will need a second climber.

Luckily, KB7Q discovered that the 40 meter inverted vee loads beautifully on six, and Gene has been working some incredible DX on six using FT8 via the remote.

## **PJ2T in 2023 Spring Stew Perry Topband Distance Challenge, by Jeff K8ND / PJ2ND**

As I favor the 160-meter band, the quarterly Stew Perry contests are high points of the year.

With the 2023 Spring version upcoming March 11-12, I requested use of the PJ2T remote for the event. The switch from RCForb back to the RemoteRig interfaces, operating has become a pleasure, comparable to sitting in front of the radio at Signal Point. And the move from a KPA-500 to a KPA-1500 (Thanks for the loan, N7NR!) allows for a full-power operation.

Conditions for the Stew were frustrating. Full callsigns were copyable, but QSB was very fast. Several cases of a call copied but no report could be heard. I never really got a run going: I never felt like I was loud into the USA, and had many cases of my CQ frequency being encroached by stations that clearly did not consider my presence an obstruction. Best rates only 29, 25 and 20 (01z, 02z, 03z).

16 countries, only 11 European stations, and 85 grids worked. Best DX was two Ukrainians. While I thought perhaps ZL and VK stations might be calling at the end of our 12.25 dark hours, no RX antenna in that direction made QSOs impossible.

147 QSOs for a tentative 1327 points. Based on the 3830 postings and preliminary results posted on the Stew Perry web site, it appears that it was a 4<sup>th</sup> place finish in the High Power category.



Command Central at K8ND, Powell, Ohio

## **Ridge Tower Re-Painting Complete**



W0CG and the Ridge paint bucket, March 20

The selfie above shows a very hot and tired and wet W0CG after repainting the Ridge tower, just before I headed back to the shack. K5LD and I started the Ridge repainting project in early March with able ground help from K4JC, but did not finish. I went back on the 20<sup>th</sup> with a bucket of grey epoxy paint and managed to totally recoat that tower. Corrosion is slower that far away from the ocean, but it is still very much a threat and we need to aggressively keep up with that rust. With this last work that tower should be good for about three years until it needs more attention.

## **Faulty uSwitch and A-Plug Returned**

The second remote controlled AC power switch, our “fail safe” switch seemed unreliable after its original installation. I did extensive careful tests on March 29 and proved to myself that it could not be trusted. The mechanical mating of pins from the 12 volt DC supplied by the A-Plug was not reliably reaching the switch itself.

I E-mailed the company and received a personal reply from Mario Costa, uSwitch’s technical principal, within 20 minutes! He had me send some photos of our installation and did some remote checks after I supplied out IP address. Mario quickly concurred that the unit was unreliable and said he would send me a replacement in April and a return address label. I brought the bad gear back to Ohio and will ship it out as soon as the new switch arrives. I’ll reinstall it in October. Meanwhile, I ganged the PC and RRC box power together and Gene and Robert and I carefully tested that we could do a cold reboot of these with the new switch configuration. We should be fine with this setup until the fall season.

The photo shows this configuration just before I physically removed the bad unit on the left.



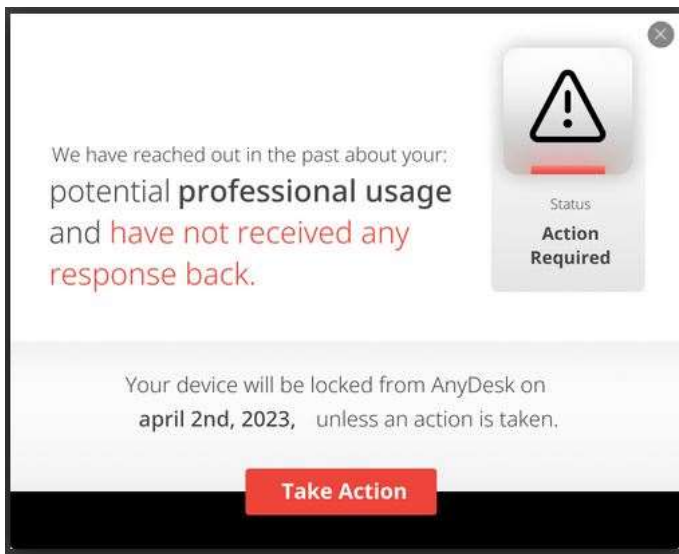
Remote station AC power configuration. The left switch has now been removed for return to the vendor.

### Important Note for Remote Users, by K5PI

As you may know, I've been an enthusiastic user of the PJ2T remote for the last few months. I recently ran into some snags using AnyDesk.

AnyDesk is used as a part of the PJ2T remote system. It allows operators to remotely control the PC in Curacao to turn on/off the radio and amplifier, and to select antennas.

AnyDesk is offered free to individual users and is sold to professional users. I'd been using it free, but got a warning that I'd used it more than 70 times in the last 30 days. The warning said if I was a professional user, I should purchase it. Not being a professional user, I ignored it. A few days later, I got another note to say I needed to take some action, or I would lose access.



I clicked on the Take Action button to see what the options were. I wasn't excited about purchasing a subscription, which starts at \$178.80 per year. I found a button, however, that said, "If you believe you have been incorrectly identified as a professional user, click here." It took me to a form where I had an opportunity to explain my usage and request to be white-listed. I filled out the form and explained that I was using it for amateur radio and provided a brief explanation of what amateur radio was.

I didn't ever receive a message to confirm that I'd been whitelisted, but the deadline passed and the nag messages stopped. YMMV

### Historic Spark Gap Operation from PJ2T

One night I was sleeplessly wandering in the backyard while K8ND was operating 160 via the remote. A spark of light caught my eye about 2/3 of the way up the Europe Tower, then another, then a cascade of orange embers falling to the ground like fireworks. Cripes! Soon I realized that if I listened carefully I could copy Jeff's CW by listening to the high voltage buzz on the tower. This sure as heck explained why he was seeing occasional high SWR during transmit.

I knew immediately that this was coming from a spot where the Eur 3el 80 delta loop director was in contact with the tower, as I had foreseen this and tried to protect against it. The protection failed. That parasitic element obviously has high induced currents from the 160 Inverted L, and had caused the insulation on the director to burn through.

A couple days later I went up to just below the Pacific Tribander and found the tower leg to be burned black. After some sanding and lots of augmentation of insulation on the wire, all was well, and I put on a coat of epoxy paint to protect the burned tower leg. Problem fixed. If we ever had any doubt about induced currents in parasitic elements, this squelches it. It was quite a fire show.

### CCC Get-Together in Melbourne, Florida

Dorothy and I closed out the island QTH on April 3 and rented a one-way car at MIA to be returned eight days later in Canton, Ohio. She had been wanting to see some sights in Miami after so many quick airport transits, so we played tourist there for a couple of days. On April 5 we arrived at the home of longtime CCC member Dan Gravereaux, N1ZZ. He and Kathy had a wonderful dinner for us, which we enjoyed at poolside at their beautiful Melbourne home.



N1ZZ, his XYL Kathy, and Dorothy in Melbourne, April 5, 2023

Most of you know Dan as founder/owner of West Mountain Radio and inventor of the RigBlaster, RigRunner, and many other brilliant gadgets. After he sold West Mountain Radio he still had the creative urge, and founded Paradan Radio, continuing to turn out popular shack accessories that sell like crazy.

Dan has found it most effective to assemble many of his products at home. After dinner I had the great privilege of working the Paradan assembly line for a couple of hours, helping The Master assemble about 16 units of a battery charger controller. Dan's workroom smelled like every TV repair shop of the 50s and 60s, so I was in electronics heaven working at Dan's bench (below).



N1ZZ and W0CG at the Paradan bench, April 5, 2023

We also managed to wedge in a quick visit to the PCARS club station that evening. Here are Don (AF4Z), N1ZZ, and CCC member Walter (K5LD) at the beautiful Platinum Coast Amateur Radio Society station in Melbourne.



At the PCARS club station, three of the ops who won ARRL DX SSB at PJ2T in early March; AF4Z, N1ZZ, K5LD

Dan was kind enough to put us up for the night, and we had breakfast together Thursday morning (below).



On the beach in Melbourne, Geoff and the ladies, April 6, 2023

After breakfast we headed north, being tourists at various points of interest as we made our way toward Ohio, spending nights in Kissimmee, Florida; Montgomery, Alabama; Townsend, Tennessee (with Geoff's old college friend); and Charleston, West Virginia. We returned the car on time on April 11 and Dorothy flew back to Idaho April 14<sup>th</sup>.

### Hint for Remote Ops on 30 M

Robert K5PI has been using the 80M ridge antenna on 30M with excellent results. He reports that it's quieter and works very well for both EU and NA -- better than the 30M antenna in the yard, in his experience. When operating remote, just use the amplifier tuner as usual. Local ops need to 1) confirm there is no bandpass filter in line, 2) put the amp in standby, and 3) use the radio's tuner. Remember that power output must be limited to 200W.

## Table Maintenance

On March 15 and 16 Dorothy extensively sanded the chipped paint on the patio main table (below).



Sanding and paint prep on the patio table, March 16.

That table, a gift from W8TK many years ago, has an aluminum frame with anodized decorative paint. We had repainted the frame years ago, and it was time for a repeat. After much sanding and scraping, and a scrub-down, we put on two cans of texture spray paint, a bargain on Curacao at \$36/can, below.



Dorothy applying spray paint, two coats, to the patio table, March 16, 2023.

The table again looks great, and woe to those who use the lower bar as a footrest. (You'll have to answer to Dorothy <grin> .)

## Long Term PJ2T Wish List

- Automatic switchable bandpass filters for the remote station, nine bands, with controller (This project is now in process.)
- Diesel generator
- Manual AC power transfer switch

- More 3CX1200A7 tubes. (DL8OBQ obtained one for us.)
- More 3CPX800A7 tubes.

## Member Spotlight: Robert Brandon, K5PI

In the mid-70s, I was in Junior High and fooled around with CB, crystal radios, and was amazed that I could hear Chicago's WLS in my little Texas town with just a transistor radio. Then my buddy, Mick (now K5YV) got his license and showed me his station and his logbook. I learned the code and got my feet wet with his Drake 2B and DX-60.

In January 1977, I was licensed as WD5AAT, and made a few QSOs with my dad's S-38 and a DX-60. I soon upgraded my license and my radio to an SB-102. Wow! As I teenager, I could put on my headset and be transported to other worlds where I could handle traffic with a college professor N5TC, a lawyer WA5RKU (now W5CU) on the TEX CW traffic net. I could contact places I'd never heard of, including many behind the mysterious iron curtain. I could have a nice ragchew and enjoy the wows and FBs when I sent my age on my bug.

We had a small radio club in my home town of Lampasas that provided many great elmers including W5GFR, WB5RPU (SK), K5SOR, W5LKT (SK), and W5YC (SK). W5GFR hired me to work at the local radio shop after school where I'd set up business band radios and do basic repairs on CB rigs.

I was very busy during my time at the University of Texas, but visited the club station W5EHM (now N5XU) a number of times. After college, I was inactive for about 10 years but in the early 90s, I picked up a QST and felt like Rip Van Winkle. Look how tiny those radios are! And they can do what?! I picked up some VHF gear and an old Icom HF rig, and jumped right back in. After a few years, I put up a 40 foot tower and my first tribander. Wow – was that ever a step up! I started chasing DX and doing limited part time contesting and having a great time.

In the mid-90s I discovered the Central Texas DX and Contest Club. Holy cow – this was the brain trust of ham radio in Austin! These guys weren't just working a new country every once in a while, they were at the top of the Honor Roll. They weren't just fooling around in contests, they were WINNING! For ARRL DX CW in 1997, N3BB held an open house at his multi-tower station, and I jumped at the opportunity. I had never seen computer logging, used monoband or beverage antennas, and I certainly never had multiple

stations coming back to my every QRZ. After that, I wheedled my way into other guest op seats at other local stations including the new superstation at N5TW.

Then in August of 2000, K5TR asked if I'd like to operate sometime at W5KFT. I'd met George while we were both in high school, but we'd lived about an hour apart. Anyway, he turned me loose with two radios and the monobanders at KFT for NAQP CW, and I had a blast! He's coached me about contesting and station maintenance for some time – I still pester him from time to time today. He was planning to build his own station and wondered if I'd be interested in taking over maintenance of W5KFT. I didn't have much tower experience, but I learned a lot from George – at least enough to know my limits. ☺ I shook hands with Bryan, the owner of W5KFT at his family's ranch, and the rest is history. I've been operating the major CW contests from W5KFT ever since. I've also operated from great Texas stations including K5TR, N3BB, and K5NA.

I've had some great opportunities to contest as DX and have operated from HC8N and several times from ZF1A. In 2007, I met John WC0W/V31TP/V3T and have been going to Belize for ARRL DX CW every year since. We've won M/S a number of times and in 2015, I won my first contest as a single op from there.

In 2018, I did my first DXpedition to the Austral Islands and operated as TX5T. There were five of us, and not having met some of them, I wasn't sure who would operate which modes. After 72 hours, we saw a cluster spot that said, "Guess they left their microphones at home". Okay, okay – we finally swung the boom mikes down, but as soon as the pileup thinned, we would all go back to CW!

The following year, I organized a DXpedition to the Marquesas with the same group and had a great time.

My friend Madison W5MJ and I love to go mobile in the Texas QSO Party. We're always pushing the envelope (M/2, high power, etc.), but we swear we're going to keep it simple next year. ☺

I retired from IBM in 2017 (tech writer, Microsoft server techhie, technical project manager, governance board manager), and am enjoying lots more time for radio, scuba diving, and playing music. My wife is finishing a career in State government, and we look forward to some nice trips in the future. She's doesn't quite understand why I go to exotic places to sit in a room and do data entry, but she often tags along to enjoy the natural scenery.

Looking forward to my next trip to Curacao -- see you there!

### Ancillary Visitors N2BA and NU3O at Signal Point

CCC member Brooke Allen, N2BA, has been mentoring a friend, NU3O, who is fairly newly licensed and working his way up the learning curve. Brooke figured that some overseas operating would be a good indoctrination for Chris.

Brooke rented House #3 (formerly owned by our friend Marlies Feys), and he and Christopher and his delightful XYL Margarita lived there for the week. Brooke and Christopher operated at PJ2T in the four days between their arrival and the arrival of the WPX team. The photo shows them at Station 2.



N2BA and NU3O, March 20, 2023

Once the WPX team arrived both Christopher and Brooke spent some time monitoring. Christopher also plugged in with experienced operators, such as W5WZ, during the contest to get a taste of speed and pileups. They had also planned to put up a station at their rental house, and borrowed PJ2T equipment to do so, but they could not get the antenna to work and abandoned that effort. This trip and Brooke's mentoring were a superb experience for Christopher, who had never really made any QSOs whatever and enjoyed this learning experience.

To help NU3O get started, Brooke made up this helpful script sheet (next page).

