



Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium
Editor: W0CG

Volume 25, Number 3

March 15, 2025

1003 QSOs in One Hour !!

This is extraordinary. In the first hour of the ARRL DX SSB contest on the evening of February 28, our team logged 1003 contacts, something we have never seen before and may never again attain. This hour was the absolute pinnacle of Multi/Multi contesting. Here's the breakdown for that hour.

80: 32 (W3US)
40: 132 (K8PGJ)
20: 256 (K5LD)
15: 291 (K4JC)
10: 292 (ND8L)

TOTAL: 1003

(And it might have been more, but the 160 meter remote operation had technical problems at the Stateside end, and we lost that band.) Congratulations to these five operators, who experienced something truly unprecedented. Over time I'll be making a documentary video about this contest for YouTube which will include live audio and consolidated log video of parts of this incredible first hour. After four hours we had logged just under 3000 contacts. This is the kind of best-in-world experience you are missing if you're not coming to your club station to operate. It was incredible.

Based on 3830 claimed scores, it looks like we won the world, making the most contacts of any station on the globe. Here's the score summary.

Class: M/M HP

QTH: Curacao

Operating Time (hrs): 48

Location: South America

Band	QSOs	Mults		
160:	196	40		
80:	974	58		
40:	1848	59		
20:	3121	59		
15:	2523	60		
10:	3269	58		
Total:	11931	334	Total Score	11,937,828

We had a great week in Curacao, highlighted by the return of ageless N1ZZ, whose 86th birthday we celebrated on March 3. Dorothy was kind enough to bake Dan a cake, and we sang and ate cake on Monday before the team's departure.

Parks on the Air was an important part of this week in Curacao. N1ZZ, K5LD, AK4R, and K4JC arrived a day early so that several of them could strike out very early on Tuesday morning to activate several Curacao parks. This even included a boat trip to Klein Curacao island for a first-time activation of that park.

While POTA guys gave out new ones, the rest of us prepped for the contest, practiced, and did maintenance on the house and station. Among those activities, Dan repainted the badly faded logo and mailbox at the entrance to the QTH. This is an insult to ask a galleried artist to do something like this, but he gladly took it on. I had brought a set of acrylic paints and brushes, purchased on the advice of my artistic daughter, and Dan went to work.



N1ZZ and his renewed CCC logo at the front gate

Dan's work was complicated by piles of sand and gravel out front left over from construction, which AK4R kindly shoveled out of the way. In addition, numerous contractors and heavy equipment were working in the street only feet away from Dan. Several of those guys loved what he was doing with the paints and went out of their way to say "Hi" and give him a thumbs up.



Here's the World #1 Team: Dan (N1ZZ), Ray (ND8L), Rusty (W3US), Vince (K4JC), Steve (AK4R), Pete (K8PGJ), Geoff (W0CG/PJ2DX), David (KE3VV), Walter (K5LD). Thaire (W2APF) missing from photo.

W9NJY and N7IR Departures

I'm sorry to have to report the departure of two key members from CCC. Andy, W9NJY, CCC's President, has opted out of the group, reporting that he is "PJ2T-ed out," and because he's not enjoying contesting as much as time goes by. Andy was very gracious in his E-mail to me, treasures the friendships he has made through the group, and I made it clear that we would welcome him any time he wishes to sit in for a future contest.



W9NJY working the spaghetti, November, 2013

Andy's contributions to PJ2T are many, including his participation in the installation of the Bencher Skyhawk on the Ridge. He and Uli (DL8OBQ) and Jason (NR0X) and I put in some tough days hauling that antenna to the site and assembling it in place up there in killer heat and UV. At that time, Andy taught me about cerebral profusion, and the lack of same. Most notable, however, was his design, construction, installation, and ongoing support of the "W9NJY box." This is the high power remote coax switch that allows us to select among four ports on the Ridge, two of which are presently in use. He did all of the difficult engineering, spending the better part of a summer in his Wisconsin workshop, and picked up the very considerable tab for all of the parts. That device continues to be central to every contest operation we undertake from here. We will miss his company and sharp wit. He has discovered the world of high-end classical music touring, and we wish him every possible delight in that pursuit.

CCC VP ND8L does not want to take over as president, so we'll seek a volunteer at the Hamvention.

Gary, N7IR, has very generously served as PJ2T's Station Equipment Lead since joining the group in 2016. In that capacity, he has been the leader in everything in the shack, sans computers (That's KB7Q), with particular emphasis on the K3 transceivers. As you know, he's a wizard, having taken care of electron microscopy equipment and facilities at Arizona State University prior to retiring. Gary has a fully equipped electronics workbench at home in Chandler, Arizona, and has made countless repairs and upgrades of our K3s, also advising on what and when to purchase additional equipment.

Band	QSOs	Mults		
160:	386	48		
80:	823	57		
40:	1441	59		
20:	1893	60		
15:	1886	58		
10:	1904	59		
Total:	8333	341	Total Score	8,501,130

Our team was AD4ES, K7TQ, N7WA, NF9V, VE3CX, W4SO, W2APF, WI9WI, and K8ND and N7NR on the remote.



N7IR in his element at night on 160, CQWW CW, November, 2019

Gary is departing because, like so many in our group, his personal situation (just like mine) is changing over time. But he has made the extraordinarily generous offer to continue to support and repair our K3s, at no charge, and to continue to advise us on technical matters. We're extremely grateful to him for this, because many times over the years I have been in panic at the prospect of losing Gary's great help. I know how to turn a K3 on, and then back off, and that's about it.

We will miss Gary's company and super help on site, and he's welcome here any time he wants to drop in for a contest.

Farewell to Andy and Gary, and I'm full of thankfulness for having had the pleasure of their company, for all they have taught me, and for all their help for many years.

ARRL CW Contest Report

The ARRL DX CW contest was a fun success, logging 8333 contacts. Here's the claimed score.

Class: M/M HP
QTH: Curacao

As usual, the contest began not with the team's arrival, but several days before with the meal planning and grocery runs. Here are Dorothy and Annette (KA9DOC) at Goisco loading up to support the big incoming team.



Dorothy and Annette at the new Goisco

Goisco is membership wholesale club with a giant store that's too far from Signal Point to do us much good. In a stroke of great luck, they have just opened a second location in the former Cost-U-Less building. This now provides us an affordable and nearby source of groceries, particularly the large-quantity items such as beer and soft drinks. We are members and get a discount, benefitting the contest teams.

The team arrived on Tuesday, February 11.



The Dreamliner arriving from Toronto, VE3CX on board. February 11, 2025.

VE3CX was particularly happy to get here after his long and difficult trek from Thunder Bay, Ontario, where the temps were in minus double digits. Tom spends a motel night in Toronto on this itinerary. He and his XYL have just moved into a brand new custom built house on a lake, so Tom badly needed a break from that stress.

With help from W4SO, who rented a car, we managed to get everyone home that afternoon, although the Scott gang went on their own shopping trip and missed scheduled dinner at the Moran house.

This contest team was particularly notable in that N7WA finally made it back to Signal Point after six years of faithfully discharging family duties that prevented him from traveling anywhere whatsoever. In those years, Dink has been massively faithful in maintaining his membership in CCC, most years paying double dues and always supporting our special campaigns. He is a top operator and a good friend, and it was wonderful to have him here again.

On the downside, we missed but very fondly remembered and celebrated our friendships with past ARRL CW contest regulars W9VA, K2PLF, WA9S, and NP2L, all now Silent Keys.

This team arrived ready to work! At every turn someone was standing beside me asking "What can I do?" The first answer was to tackle the 20 to 10 crossband interference problem using the directional antenna and HT that Dink had brought in his luggage. Here's Dink in the process of setting up some of the equipment for testing.



N7WA (Dink) setting up the 20 meter station for testing, Feb 13, 2025.

As reported elsewhere, our approach was to isolate the entire house from commercial power by running an extension cord from the neighbor's house. We thus created an interference-free combination, then began adding local elements until the interference returned. As you know, we finally traced it to two bad AC power fuses and fuse holders and one bad Foscam power supply. Dink and Tom (VE3CX) put in many hours with me and were a delight to work with, as clean and systematic thinkers with good technical backgrounds and patient powers of deduction.



VE3CX with Dink's directional receiving setup, February 13.

But they were just getting started! K7TQ offered to tackle the project of finding and fixing a broken radial that had been lost ever since we installed the fibre. I told him where to look, and he dug with a trowel for a couple of hours with the care of an archaeologist, finally finding the buried wire. It was about nine inches deep! He and Dink soldered everything back together. Another project item off the list.

What next? Randy and Dink jumped into action and helped me retune the 80 meter 2el US/JA antenna, after which Dink risked his life standing on top of a wall and ladder to trim tree branches that were in the way.

Done? Not a chance. After the contest, Dink again asked what could he do?! So the three of us launched into the task of removing the forms from the new generator concrete base. This was much trickier than you might imagine because Ribert built those forms with Torx head screws that were buried well underground. But no job was too tough for these guys, who were skilled and game for the dirty work, and we

eventually got the forms off with zero damage to the slab.



N7WA, K7TQ, and W0CG removing forms, February 17, 2025.

That same day Randy (K7TQ) asked "What can I do?" Wow. So he went across the road and installed caution tape markers on our property line rope, That was tricky because he was working in bramble bushes directly next to a deep ditch. Those markers proved very effective the following week in keeping the backhoe off property that was not theirs, and protected our feedlines.

Somewhat later Dink deep dived into the old generator that we planned to sell to neighbor Mike Maley. It would not start. Dink worked for hours, doggedly, and finally got it running. Those sale proceeds went directly into the costs of getting the new generator fully in service.

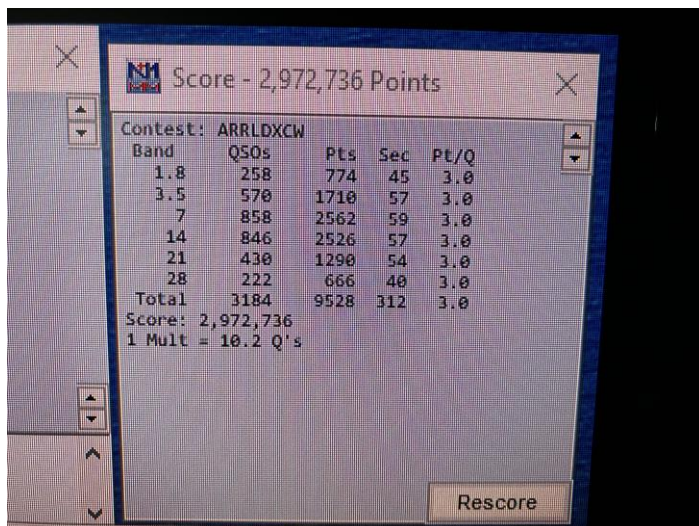
Many other work tasks got scratched off the list by the ARRL CW team. It has been a long time since I have enjoyed the likes of these skilled and energetic guys here – people who see a task, quietly go and find the needed tools, do the work, and put everything away silently and without fuss or bother or my intervention. THANKS for the help.

There was a contest, and it was fun. How could it NOT be? It's CW!!

Fittingly, our first QSO was with Randy's and my friend Gary Swartout (K7GS) in Spokane. (Randy is President, and I'm a member of the Spokane DX Association.)

We managed 724 QSOs in the first hour, with NF9V and VE3CX leading the way on 20 and 15, making 187

and 183 respectively. WI9WI posted 153 on 40, AD4ES 150 on 10, and even the low bands produced in that hour. Even with technical problems with 160 on the remote op side there were 3184 contacts in the log by 8 AM, one quarter of the way through the contest.



3184 QSOs by 8 AM Saturday

This crew was tireless. Here they are holding forth in the wee hours of Sunday morning.



In the foreground W4SO (Scott) on 40, K7TQ (Randy) 80, and N7WA (Dink) running 20 in the middle of the night Sunday AM.

K8ND and N7NR were once again instrumental in our operation, logging 812 contacts in total via the remote station. Without them we would not have been able to cover all of the needed hours because we were slightly short-staffed on the island. Thanks Dave and Jeff!



A quiet Caribbean Sunday morning at the Moran house, while the contest roars on down the street.



The contest is over! K7TQ, WI9WI, NF9V, KA9DOC, VE3CX relaxing at Monday morning breakfast with stacks of Dorothy's pancakes.

Unusual as it is, we did not win this one. ZF5T put on a M/M, got about 250 ahead of us the first night, and we could not catch up. We wrote them a note of congratulation on 3830 (link below), and Stan graciously responded afterward. This is sportsmanship at its best.

<https://www.3830scores.com/showrumor.php?arg=RvYizV770x7euU>

I thank the team for a wonderful week of radio fun and friendship. I captured video material and will put together a YouTube about this contest as time allows later in the spring. Right now, I need to use every minute on the island for project work here.

Dayton Hamvention CCC Meeting Reminder

The 2024 Annual Meeting of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium (PJ2T) will be held during the Dayton Hamvention on Friday May 16, 3:00 to 5:00 PM. The meeting will be held at the Hope Hotel in the P-51 Mustang Room as in the past three years. The Hope Hotel is adjacent to Wright Patterson Air Force Base.

Mark your calendars, and make plans to attend! (This is one of many reminders to come.)

CCC Annual Meeting
Friday May 16, 2024
3:00 -5:00 PM

Hope Hotel & Conference Center
P-51 Mustang Room
10823 Chidlaw Rd # A, Dayton, OH 45433



Major Infrastructure Work in Neighborhood

The crisis continues. Aqualetra is in the midst of installing a completely new AC power distribution system in our neighborhood. As I reported last month, this involves a backhoe and laborers digging up every pipe, every cable, all the fiber system, and all the AC drop connections to the houses. So far they have been very smart and very careful, and our buried antenna conduit has suffered only minor damage.

In fact, on March 3 AK4R helped me install a protective sleeve on our conduit at a point where it had been hit with a pickaxe, a piece broken out, and about four linear inches cracked.



The darker grey section is our radio conduit patch cap, glued in place and secure for the ages.

The peak event of this infrastructure work occurred on Wednesday, February 26 when the crews pulled in a monster cable to supply high voltage to the transformer box at the physical center of our neighborhood. That cable contained three giant aluminum conductors with a woven copper outer sheath and extremely tough plastic outer sheath. This stuff is designed for direct burial.

The pull was from a huge supply reel at the top of the hill above the house, down through the newly-constructed cable race, around a 110 degree corner across from the northwest corner of our wall, then about 500 meters east through the neighborhood, threaded through multiple driveway conduits and under many delicate crossing connections, including our radio conduit.



The feed reel at the top of the hill



The giant black HV AC cable making the turn during the pull. Many thousands of pounds of pulling tension were in play at the time of this photo. February 28, 2025.

A diesel powered cable reel did the pulling at the far end. This was an incredible operation to observe, and I captured good video for a future YouTube. The operation went safely, and the neighborhood end of that cable is now terminated, awaiting connection at the hotel end.

On Friday, March 7 the crews dug up the road in front of our house to install a conduit for AC power connection to the Maley house next door. During this time I hovered close by to protect our fiber conduit. The road was closed for a couple of hours so I opened our gate and directed traffic through our yard, over to Maley's, and out his gate.



The big grey conduit is the new route for AC to reach the Maley house. March 7, 2025. The small orange conduit left of the ditch is the fiber run to our and Maley's house. It was safely and professionally reburied.

The crews did a fast and professional job, and all was complete and the road re-opened quickly.

Since the big pull, the crews covered that cable with sand and a marker, and installed four more conduits and one low voltage line. These guys are friendly and we are on good terms with them. The final crisis will come when it is time to connect to the houses. I'm hoping fervently that that happens before I depart on April 3 because we can not have them digging on our backyard without me here.

Generator Report: GREAT!

Sunday afternoon, February 23, I finally achieved full remote control and monitoring capability from anywhere using a web-based software system. This gives us the capability to start and stop the generator from anywhere on the globe, monitor all engine and generator parameters, see the load currents, watch fuel level, view an ongoing event log, and many other features. Here's what that looks like on the web.



Our generator in operation, viewable from anywhere in the world via web browser. Note the voltages and frequency.



Engine parameters with the Signal Point generator while running. This is on my laptop.

Attaining this capability was NOT NOT easy. The technical documentation is not good. As I reported last month, we had to buy an Ethernet gateway device, which I managed to find new on EBay at the last minute and get to AD4ES just in time for Chuck to bring it for the CW contest. This 890-04 MkII Deep Sea gateway device was \$650, but that is not so bad because buying the gateway gives us lifetime free access to remote monitoring of the generator through their servers in England at the factory.

Technical configuration of the Signal Point router and of the gateway itself was equally tricky, and required several days of research, trial, and a couple of exchanges with Deep Sea technical support, but I finally got it going. The primary benefit of this capability will be that we can now remotely do a

weekly 10 minute run of the generator to keep it healthy.

The next challenge was to set up the generator for long term survival. This required painting it from top to bottom with a coat of epoxy primer and a followup of epoxy finish paint, just as we do with our towers. There is no way this expensive device will survive our salt air without this coating.

It pained me to have to convert this beautiful machine from factory-fresh to epoxy-painted, but it will protect it from salt and also makes it look like something old and ugly that one would not be so tempted to steal.



Generator masked off and ready for paint, March 4.

Only about an hour after the ARRL SSB team departed I went to work on this painting task. I had primed the skids at the bottom before they arrived, but there was no time to do any more while the team was here.



Working on the finish coat, March 6.

I worked steadily all of March 5 and 6 on this paint with the goal of being finished before the expected arrival of a fork lift on March 7. The primer is grey. I opted for a green finish coat because this makes the generator much less visible from the road, and it practically seems to disappear in the dark. The goal was to make it safe, survivable, and functional, not pretty.



The completed paint job, March 6, 2025.

With the paint complete the generator was ready to go onto the pad, now cured for a month.

On March 7 I installed supplemental wiring that connects the DSE 890-4 Ethernet Gateway to the +12 VDC input terminals from the lead acid battery. I then left the system on for 24 hours with the smart battery charger de-energized, simulating a long power outage at Signal Point. In that time the lead acid battery dropped from 12.1 V to 11.8. I then cranked the unit and the engine started immediately, recharging the battery.

This assures that even over long Aqualectra power outages the gen system will be able to recover on its own from an outage and automatically restore communication with the remote server.

We have opted not to depart the QTH with the autostart capability engaged. This is because there is no need for the generator to start automatically when power goes off and there is nobody at the QTH. Also, there is danger in leaving the system on “Auto” because if someone is here, when the commercial power comes back on the transfer switch will automatically revert to commercial power. When it does that, there is a two second gap, and immediate return of power to the amplifiers after these two seconds will very likely blow the electrolytics in the amps. It will be much safer if a human on site manages the generator startup and shutdown in case of an outage. This will protect our equipment. I will write a simple procedure for this for times when I am not at the QTH.

Meanwhile, we are assured of long-term ability to command a brief generator run each week when nobody is here. This will keep the diesel engine healthy and happy.

On March 10 we managed to get a forklift on site to place the generator onto the now cured concrete slab. The cost for the forklift was \$229, less than my original estimate of \$300. The operator was very careful and meticulous.



Signal Point powerplant in its final location, March 10.

After the forklift departed I spent a couple of hours dressing all the cables neatly into their final runs from the standpipe into the genset. We're now fully in service. Thanks AC7DC!!

K8ND Print Cartridge Donation

Thanks to K8ND for his donation of \$120 for a new print cartridge for the HP LaserJet he bought for the station years ago. I picked it up at the Better Deals store on February 20.

Europe Tower Painting Is Complete

On May 12 I completed putting on a fresh finish coat of grey epoxy from the top plate down to 20 feet. We will not overcoat from 20 feet to the bottom because this portion is still in like new condition.. I used the new Interthane 990 two component paint with excellent result. This is very high quality material. The Europe tower now needs no maintenance except for a one-coat redo every three years, and repair and recovering of some very minor rust spots.

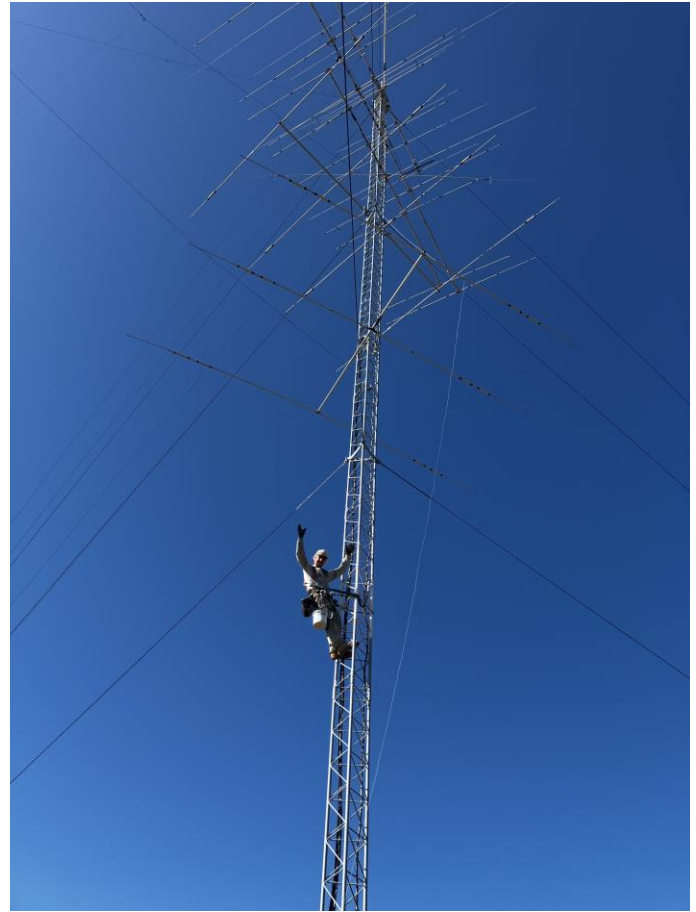


W0CG heading up with a bucket of paint for a two hour painting session, February 25, 2025.

I had previously said that I would no longer do this work, but duty called, and I had to do this in order to protect our very large investment in this tower, which was new in 2018. Truth be told, I found the work to be

entirely do-able and well within my capability, and our tower is now protected until 2028.

Dorothy caught this photo of me celebrating when there was only about a three foot section of white left to cover.



Geoff celebrating the completion of the Europe Tower paint, March 12, 2025

K8ND 3CX1200A7 Purchase and Donation

As you know, spare tubes for our eight AL-1200s are a central key to our long term survival. We have spare parts for these amps on site, but when the tubes go, they are gone.

K8ND has made heavy use of the amp at Station 1 during his long term visits to the QTH in the past couple of years. In return, he has very kindly been keeping an eye out for a chance to buy one of the very rare 3CX1200A7 tubes. Finally in early March he spotted one on EBay at a highly rated seller, apparently new in box.



The new tube at Jeff's Ohio QTH, March 8, 2025

He quickly bought it as a donation to the club. Jeff will ship it to my Ohio QTH in early April, I will find a place nearby to test it, probably at W8AV's, and we will report the results. My plan is, as usual, to run it on filaments only for 24 hours before applying any RF.

If the tube is good it will be designated PJ2T Tube #54 and placed into the spares inventory at Signal Point this coming fall. This will give us a comfortable margin of backup tubes so that we will be able to count on having these amps for years to come. We continue to avoid contemporary amps with microprocessors and modern components because we can not repair them on site like the venerable old AL-1200s.

Thanks K8ND!

Challenges with Epoxy Paint

For 25 years we have relied on the easy availability in Curacao of two-component paint. We've been buying it at the Antillanse Verffabriek (AVF) paint factory on the island, where it is made locally. This primer and paint are difficult to work with because they need to carefully mixed with the hardener just prior to use, and it is very expensive. But this stuff is the only coating that will protect steel in the towers, security bars, air conditioners, and many other vulnerable places on the site.

In early January the rumor was confirmed that this paint had been discontinued at AVF and would no longer be available. I went to AVF and bought a gallon of the last AP Thane two component paint in stock, in white. This paint unavailability created a crisis because I needed to do urgent maintenance on both Rohn towers because of my absence in the fall season.

Fortunately, the crisis ended. With help from PJ2BR we found out that the AVF business on Curacao had been recently been bought by a large Dutch holding company. Accordingly, they were changing their source of two component paint to International Paints. That product is called Interthane 990. The parent company is global chemical giant Akzo-Nobel.



That paint is now in stock, and I picked up two gallons of the new finish paint, a gallon of their primer, and one last gallon of the old AP Thane. I'm happy to report that the new paint is better than the old because it is easier to mix, can be obtained in any tinted color mixed at the point of purchase, has better pot life than the old stuff, and is even a wee bit cheaper. That is if \$160/gallon can be considered "cheap."

