



# Signals From The Point

Official Newsletter of the Caribbean Contesting Consortium

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## PJ2T 2001 ARRL DX CW Contest



Here is the **PJ2T** team for the 2001 ARRL DX CW Contest. (l-r KP2L, W0CG, N8BJQ, WA9S, W9EFL, W9VA)

### Multi-Single

BAND	QSOS	MULTS
160	299	45
80	513	54
40	777	55
20	814	56
15	1079	57
10	1347	58

**Total 4829 QSOS / 325 multipliers / 4,708,275 points**

## PJ2K 2001 ARRL DX SSB Contest

### Single Op High Power – K6RO Operator

BAND	QSOS	MULTS
160	47	19
80	484	52
40	672	57
20	1214	58
15	1433	58
10	2301	58

**Total 6151 QSOS / 302 multipliers / 5,572,806 points**

## From The Editor

By Jeff Clarke **KU8E**

Greetings to everyone. As I write this column there is a lot of activity going on at *Signal Point*.. **PJ2T** was on in both modes of the ARRL DX contest. A **CCC** group activated the station for ARRL DX CW and **K6RO** did the first Single-Op operation from Signal Point as **PJ2K** in the ARRL DX SSB contest. Next up is the WPX SSB contest with Jim, **WI9WI** operating Single-Op as **PJ2WI** and the WPX CW contest at the end of May when **K6LA** will operate as **PJ2U**. The next planned CCC operation will be in July for the IARU contest. As you can see *Signal Point* is becoming a popular destination for the contest crowd. Most of the major (and some minor) contest weekends are all booked for 2001. Geoff is starting to take reservations for 2002 so book your contest ASAP before it is gone !

It is also getting close to the time when we put the **PJ2T** station construction activities into high gear. A bunch of us are meeting on March 17<sup>th</sup> at the **W8AV** QTH to get all the tower and antennas gathered at a central point and ready them for shipment to Curacao. It has yet to be determined on where everything might be shipped from. It might take a U-Haul truck and a couple of guys driving to Florida to get everything to Curacao without breaking the bank!! Stay tuned....

Hopefully everyone will be going to Dayton this year and we can all get together. Some of the group will be going to the DX dinner, which is hosted by our own **N8BJQ**. Maybe we will all find the time during the weekend to run into each other. Until next time .....

73's Jeff **KU8E**

Check out the Caribbean Contesting Consortium web page at

<http://asgard.kent.edu/cc/>

## So Who the Heck Is W0CG ? by Geoff Howard

My story is pretty typical: early fascination with electronic communication over distances, intense ham activity in high school, an engineering education with no time for hamming, and then a busy career that prevented much ham radio activity, until about 10 years ago.

I remember being in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and finding an order blank for a Morse code trainer in a Bazooka bubble gum wrapper. So I saved a LOT of wrappers, begged my Mom for some cash, and ordered the thing. Pretty sophisticated – two D batteries, a buzzer, a piece of spring steel that pretended to be a key, a flashlight bulb and, best of all, the Morse code imprinted on the housing. Having nothing better to do in Clarksburg, West Virginia in the summertime, I memorized the code characters and send messages to myself.

The following year found us relocated to Wintersville, Ohio, and I found a neighbor friend who was as nutty as I was. We figured out how to put wires in the ground and communicate from house to house using key clicks and Morse. Jim moved away, but I continued my path as a weird kid, taking apart washing machines, building pretend radio consoles, and dying to know what all that neat stuff was inside the TV sets I dug out of garbage piles and dismantled at home. One year and one move later, we were in Wheeling and I found a stack of National Radio Association electronics home study lesson books on a trash heap in somebody's garbage in the neighborhood. What a breakthrough – these things actually EXPLAINED what all the cool stuff was inside radios and TVs, and soon I was learning about tubes, amplifiers, characteristic impedance, and all kinds of other fascinating aspects of electronics, still all on my own. I honestly remember lying awake nights because I couldn't quite grasp the purpose of that third grid in vacuum tubes. (The *normal* kids were playing basketball and riding bikes.)

One summer day in 1963, when I was 13, I picked up a copy of *Popular Electronics* at a drug store, and the whole issue was devoted to how to become a ham. I still have that original magazine! I read (worshipped) every word in the magazine, figured out how to listen to 40 meter CW on my grandfather's 300 pound all-band Zenith receiver in his living room, and ordered the Lafayette and Allied Electronics catalogs by clipping coupons from that magazine. I also ordered the License Manual from ARRL, and soon felt ready to take the Novice exam. Problem was, I knew no hams, but my grandmother remembered an old high school friend who was (she thought) a ham, and gave him a call. George Prostinak, W8LBI, my childhood hero, phoned and like a true Elmer offered to teach me all I would need for a license exam. I explained that I thought I could probably pass the test without any coaching but that I had no Dad, my Mom could not drive, and thus I had no way to get to his house, which was about 20 miles distant. Naturally, he showed up the next day, drove me to his QTH, and there I had my first glimpse of Heaven.

About all I remember from that day was going up an endless hill, reaching the top and a utility pole topped with what had to be biggest antenna in history, and a room full of Collins gear that doubled my heart rate. Palms sweating, I copied CW while George sent me some sample text, then the five minutes of real copy for the Novice exam. He was pretty much dumbfounded that I copied it 100% OK, and about an hour later was even more

so after discovering, in progressive steps, that I could copy perfect 35 WPM cipher groups, never before having met a ham or set foot in a shack. Wish I could have swapped that code talent for an ability to make money on Wall Street, but at that moment getting a ham license was everything, and so the knack I had for CW came in handy. George then administered the written exam, and we sent it off for grading, pretty confident that I had gotten through OK.

Next question: want to see how the station works? That was, of course, like asking young Neil Armstrong if he wanted to go for an airplane ride. All of George's stuff was classic Collins: a KWS-1, 75A4, BIG antenna tuners and open line, one of the first iambic keyers, and a view through the shack windows of the antenna and many miles of West Virginia hilltops. He made a contact on 20 SSB with a fellow in Kansas City, and all I can remember is pure unrestrained childhood joy at the sound of the linear fan, clanking of big relays, the smell of the hot tubes, musical sound of the loud signals, and the magic of being able to talk that far without wires. George then kindly drove me home to await receipt (I hoped) of the license, and it's fair to say that I haven't been right since.

I had been cutting grass for dozens of neighbors for years, so I used my grass money to get a Knight T-50 (used) through the Ham Trader yellow sheets. A neighbor provided a general coverage (1930s vintage) Zenith all band receiver he was about to toss out, and soon the station was all set up in the basement. Mom and I lived with her parents, though, and unfortunately my grandfather had witnessed the loss of his childhood home to a fire, thus he was very nervous about lightning. The result was that all I was allowed to put up outside was a 40 meter folded dipole, 10 feet high, in between ours and the neighbor's house. This was quite a sight, as the houses were both old style three story frames, and were only about 10 feet apart. Even better, we were located near the bottom of a deep valley ringed with hills, typical of West Virginia topography. Not exactly a DX dream.

One magic day in September, my ticket came, bearing the callsign WN8KUW. I fired up with my one crystal on 7176.0 and started calling. Five weeks later – yep, FIVE WEEKS of calling later, WN8JFP answered my call, on 23 October 1963, and I was off and running. (I still have the QSL from that first contact.) Over time, my grandfather relented, after much begging, and let me move the 40 dipole between a couple of trees, and much higher, and then I actually had reasonable success on 40 CW in the afternoons after school. The ultimate kick was that first DX QSO, YU1BG, and by then there was nothing else to do but get more stuff, more antennas, more books, more licenses. Another long time friend of my grandmother's, Skip Marsh, K3SMA, VERY kindly drove down from Pittsburgh and took me to the FCC office to get the General ticket, then drove me all the way back home. Many lawns later, the Zenith was replaced by a Drake 2-B, and I started having lots of fun in traffic nets and in the CD Party contests of the mid-sixties. My signal was till next to nothing on all bands, but I was having fun.

During that period I met another Elmer, Bill Fugate, W8IYD, who not only taught me how to build gear properly, but actually hauled me with his wife and kids to the West Virginia State ARRL convention several summers running. He was pretty dumbfounded when I won the CW contest there, year after year.

**W0CG (continued next page)**

## W0CG (continued)

Bill is a genius electrical engineer who had, among other things, built a 75 meter mobile SSB transceiver from JUNK PARTS back when SSB was still new and largely unknown.

Just before my senior year of high school, my Mom married the upstairs renter-neighbor and we moved to Youngstown, Ohio. The world changed for me because my new stepfather said “anything goes” in terms of putting antennas on the house!! Soon I had high inverted vees for 80 and 40 (but no beam) and was getting real signal reports and competing at a serious level in the CD parties. I also handled lots of NTS traffic, and spent endless hours rag chewing at night on 80 CW with WA8CFJ.

That ended it. My parents moved to an apartment after only 8 months, college came along, with study commitments, dormitory room rules, busy Air Force ROTC activity, part time jobs, and so hamming went by the wayside. I had to sell all of the gear about halfway through college to make ends meet one particularly bad semester. During that time I worked as a co-op student for several interesting companies, the high point of which was being a junior gopher on the lunar module rendezvous and landing radar at RCA Aerospace in Burlington, Mass. My landlady there let me string a dipole in her yard, I became WA1LHC, and had a few months of fun working DX from New England, which is so easy it should be illegal.

Next came an MBA degree (thank goodness for Full Fellowships), and finally a move to Kansas on Air Force active duty orders. That job involved site engineering for navigational aids, and I got to travel the world as a siting expert on TACAN, VOR, and ILS, all the while taking civilian flight instruction as fast as the GI bill and my schedule would allow. (The Air Force would not let me fly for them because I wore glasses.) Soon I found myself a flight instructor and commercial pilot, and spent endless hours in the evenings and on weekends teaching people to fly in Kansas, working at my Air Force job, and building a home on the Kansas prairie. After that house was finished, I got my first tower, 90 feet of Rohn 25, was starting to do some hamming again, and had just been assigned W0CG in the callsign lottery of 1976. Unfortunately, a divorce intervened, and that tower never got an antenna or feedline on it. I sold the house and tower to a CBer (sorry, his check was good), gave up my now civilian job, in the FAA at Kansas City Air Route Traffic Control Center, and moved back to Youngstown to try to win the hand of my high school first love, who was also divorced.

You all know Cindy – it worked out. We had dated a little and been friends in high school, but no more. Years later, after two unsuccessful marriages, we finally ended up together, instantly started a family, built a couple of houses, made a couple of moves, and had little time for ham radio. (But ask her some time about the night she started labor with our first, while I sat at the Drake twins in the apartment bedroom and worked DX CW between the contractions.)

Adam was the result of that late night DXing/contractions session, born the same day that John Lennon was murdered. After a couple of years of languishing in jobs I did not like, at salaries I liked even less, we decided a career change was in order. So with a big mortgage, two junk cars, and a toddler at home, I quit my job to pursue a Ph.D. Crazy. But we got by on soup and sandwiches and

survived that mid-career graduate school experience, making a move to Idaho along the way. Pocatello did not agree with us, and soon we found ourselves back in Ohio, having taken an EXCELLENT job offer at Kent State University. With Cindy’s wonderful support and encouragement, we soon afterward bought a ham-dream eight acre hilltop in the country south of Kent, which had absolutely no zoning restrictions on antennas. We added Amy to the family in 1984, a new house to the family in 1985 and finally, again with encouragement from Cindy, the first of three towers in 1989. In the intervening years I had been completely consumed by the stress and severe competition of winning tenure at the school, and there was not time whatsoever for radio.

In April of 89, after being licensed 26 years, I had the thrill of making my first ever QSO with a beam and a linear, and it has been great fun ever since. Now the station has progressed to three towers, 140, 115, and 80 feet, with stacked monobanders on 10 – 40, including two monster K3LR stacked beams for 20 on 49 foot booms. All is fed with Heliac, and it WORKS. I still have not been able to do much contesting, as my Air Force Reserve career is a weekend endeavor, but on occasion I have operated from home and have done very well.

Another life-changing revelation came in 1990 when we discovered the Caribbean on a trip to Jamaica with friends. Somehow I had always had an abstract, theoretical understanding that there was somewhere in the world that was warm and sunny in the winter, but that January trip really brought it to life. I quickly became SCUBA-certified, and have been going to the Caribbean at every opportunity since.

I hit 50 on 9/9/99 and, contrary to my expectations, it ain’t bad. In fact, life could not be better. I’m Professor of Information Systems, College of Business, Kent State University; Inspector General of the 911<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, Pittsburgh, as a full Colonel and, best of all, will retire from both of these jobs in three years, with a very nice triple-dipping pension and a nice 403(b) savings awaiting me. Cindy is Coordinator of Gifted Education for Summit County, Ohio, and has been Director of Music at a Lutheran church locally for many years. (If you have not heard her play, you’re missing a thrill.) In her *spare* time, she directs musicals at our local high school and we are both quite active in the high school Band Boosters organization. Last year I was very fortunate to be able to spend my research leave on St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands, signing KP2F. The research project got finished and we decided beyond a doubt that living in the cold country is an irrational act. Cindy and the kids and I are happy and healthy, and we look forward to many years of radio fun and fellowship with the CCC gang and our collective new toy, Signal Point.

## **PJ2T Summer Construction Schedule de W0GG**

### **17 March**

Gather group at Goose's and pre-assemble towers and antennas in preparation for shipment.

### **Mid-March - Mid April**

Finish the 20 and 15 monobanders.

Acquire all additional needed parts/pieces for all towers, antennas , rotors, masts, hardware, gin pole, ropes, shackles, pulleys.

Get the Windcharger tower acid-dipped and then galvanized

### **Mid-April**

Move all material from Goose's to the port and ship it to the island. N8NR is researching the logistics of this now. Our experience in the past is that shipping to Miami is very much more expensive than the ocean-borne segment, so we may find ourselves renting a *Ryder* to take the stuff to South Florida.

### **Early May**

CG or somebody will go to the island and take care of moving all the shipment to the house, and work with a contractor to do all excavation and concrete work so that guy anchors and tower bases are all ready when the main crew arrives in June.

### **9 June - 15 July:**

CG and Cindy go to the island for a five week stay. (Yippee)

**First Week:** CG + two non-climbers will assemble all antennas and lay out all tower pieces and guys, pre-assembling everything possible. Hit the hardware stores and get any items we may have missed in the shipment

**Second Week** CG + one other climber + two ground crew erect both towers, with possible assistance from a crane if money is available. Two other ground crew install MANY radials, in ground, for low band antennas.

**Third Week:** CG + one other climber + three or more ground crew install masts and rotors in both towers, then install antennas as follows: 100 foot tower: tribander and 40 yagi rotatable at top, 20 yagi fixed EU, 15 yagi fixed EU (KN7Y), 10 yagi (LGP) fixed EU , 80 foot tower: WARC yagi and 6 yagi rotatable at top, 20 yagi fixed US/JA, 15 yagi (W0CG) fixed US/JA, 10 yagi fixed US/JA

**Fourth Week:** CG + one ground crew install all Heliac feedlines (eight each) and two runs of RG/8 CG + one ground crew + install and tune wire antennas for 80 and 160 .Two other ground crew install beverage for EU, plus permanent buried coax routes for both beverages and more radials. Beverage ground crew installs and tests as much of the inside switching and stub gear as we have been able to get money for (Top Ten Devices, etc)

**Fifth Week:** CG + remaining crew get final inspection from DROV, install final grounding and lightning protection on all antennas. Operate the IARU contest, possibly as a headquarters station

Obviously, we are going to be VERY busy, and will be spending a lot of money on things in a short period of time. Many have offered to come down and help with labor, so the timetable above will help you decide when you may want to come, and when the climbers are needed and not needed. This is the big push, which will result in an absolutely giant-killer world class station for all of us, so this is the time to open our wallets and our schedules and make it happen. THANKS to everyone who has helped get us this far. Let's pitch in now and make this final push to our group goal of building a ham paradise. Look out: CN8WW, P40V, P3A, HC8N, XA5T, 8P9JA, J3A, PJ4B, VP5R among others and yes, even J6DX!



## CCC News

Welcome to our newest members : Tony Rogozinski, **N7BG** , Gerry Treas, **K8GT** , Jeff Maass, **K8ND**, and Marty Tippin, **NW0L** . This puts our membership at 22. The membership will be stay at this number until further notice. **de W0CG**

For all you 6 meter nuts, I'm happy to report that there is now a shiny new Cushcraft 5 element yagi on site in Curacao. **W6KK** bought it and took it down during **K6RO**'s ARRL DX SSB trip. I bought it for the station rather than having him haul it home. If any of you who are 6 meter lovers would like to help pick up the tab for the antenna, it was \$145. I paid for it so that Charlie would be promptly reimbursed, as he did the work to get it there, and to get it through Customs. As they say, all donations cheerfully accepted. **de W0CG**

The **CCC** now has a set of Kenwood service manuals that were ordered from *W7FG Vintage Manuals* and donated by **KU8E** . It looks like these will come in handy with all the radio problems we have been having lately HI ! **de KU8E**

I have made arrangements with Steve Bolia, **N8BJQ** to set up a table for **CCC** at the *Dayton Hamvention*. Please send a check to Steve at the following address if you intend to join us. We had a good time the last two years. Steve's address is: Steve Bolia, N8BJQ 7354 Thackery Rd. Springfield, OH 45502 Phone: 937-788-2803 FAX : 937-788-2804 **de W9EFL**

We now have a CCC mail reflector set up at [CCC@contesting.com](mailto:CCC@contesting.com). By sending an email to this address you can reach all the club members who have subscribed. Please use caution when using this and send direct emails when the subject concerns confidential club business. **de KU8E**

**AL1200 Fund** Geoff, **W0CG** reports that we are down to \$1550 owed to Noel , down from the original \$2100. This is mostly due to station support fees that have been collected along with other donations. Contact **W0CG** if you would like to help out with a donation. **De W0CG**