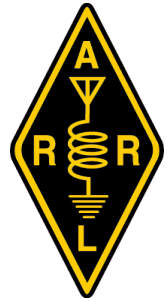




CHEESE BITS

W3CCX
CLUB MEMORIAL CALL

ARRL
Affiliated
Club



Volume LXVII

October 2024

Number 10

PREZ

SEZ:

October 2024

It seems like ever since 2019 when FT8 took over the world, each major VHF contest is followed by a two-week period where everyone feels compelled to simultaneously post their complaints on multiple email reflectors and chat pages about the lack of SSB/CW activity and the ruination of the higher frequency bands due to digital modes. This is immediately followed by numerous proposals to “fix” the perceived problem. After the two-week open mic period, exhaustion takes its toll and the number of email messages sharply trail off. Nothing significantly changes, and the cycle repeats at the conclusion of the next scheduled major VHF contest event. The issue isn’t that the ARRL is not listening. If anything, they are overwhelmed by the wide range of proposals that have been thrown at the wall – too many to discuss here.

We are part of the problem. Instead of joining the chorus of voices clogging the reflectors suggesting dozens of potential different changes, we should be working on a single reasoned proposition by the Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club and in conjunction with other similar VHF and above organizations to coordinate a response to the VUCC and the ARRL leadership. We have tried wishing it will change – it is now time to begin the hard labor of working together to determine realistic goals and objectives and when ready, voice our opinion directly to our League officials. The club BOD will begin framing this discussion. More to follow.

Many thanks to Phil Theis (K3TUF) for a very well received presentation on 10 GHz station configuration components that are available today. Phil not only drew a large crowd at the meeting site but also from far outside the local area as well-known microwave operators joined the club meeting on Zoom. Phil’s talk also attracted a large pre-meeting dinner crowd at Giuseppe’s. This was by far the biggest pre-meeting turnout in the last few years. Hope to see the momentum continue next month.

The October general club meeting will feature another highly interesting and useful presentation on emergency power solutions by Mike Gullo (WB2RVX). While this area was not affected in any serious way by the recent hurricane, it is a strong reminder that severe storms with power outages are becoming more commonplace. Learning about alternative powering solutions may keep you from sitting in the dark this coming year. Mark your calendar and plan to join us at the Ben Wilson Center on Oct 17th.

October is also the start of January VHF Contest preparation season. Time to take stock of your station and antenna system. The fall season is the perfect time to make those repairs and improvements you have been thinking about, but putting off till later. It will soon enough be later than you thought. A good starting point would be to check how many beacons you can hear on each of your bands and how close your received frequency matches the beacon frequency. The W3CCX beacons are all GPS locked.

Phil WA3NUF

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PACKRAT BEACONS - W3CCX/B

50.300 (Not operational) 144.300 (FN21be), 222.060 (FN20tk),
432.300(FN20tk), 903.300 (FN21be), 1296.300 (FN20dh),
2304.300 (FN20tk), 3400.300 (FN20dh), 5760.300 (Not
operational), 10,368.017 (Not operational) **Note: red =
temporarily off the air;** see [https://www.packratvhf.com/
index.php/on-air](https://www.packratvhf.com/index.php/on-air) for details)

MONDAY / TUESDAY NIGHT NETS

VHF/UHF Monday:

| <u>TIME</u> | <u>FREQUENCY</u> | <u>NET CONTROL</u> |
|--------------------|--|---|
| 6:45PM | 224.580 MHz | KB3MTW Michelle Even, K3JJZ El Odd Mondays |
| 7:00 PM | Packrat Talk Group See Packratvhf.com | KA3WXV George ON AIR for details |
| 7:30 PM | 50.150 MHz | N3RG FM29ki Ray |
| 8:00 PM | 144.245 MHz | W2KV FN20os Dave |
| 8:30 PM | 222.125 MHz | KC3BVL FM29jw Jim |
| 9:00 PM | 432.110 MHz | WB2RVX FM29mt Mike |

Visit the Mt Airy VHF Radio Club at: www.packratvhf.com or
www.w3ccx.com

PACKRAT E-MAIL REFLECTORS

The Pack Rats have an E-Mail reflector that is open to Pack Rats and friends of the Pack Rats. The intent of this E-mail reflector is to have a convenient means of reaching list members on subjects of general interest to the VHF/UHF and Microwave community.

Packrats@mailman.gth.net

The Pack Rats also have a **Members Only** reflector. This list consists of, and is for the use of, **only Pack Rat club members.**

Packrats-members@mailman.gth.net

See the W3CCX Web page for specific information on joining.

Club News and Notes

K3TUF's Presentation

Here is a pointer to a video of Phil's presentation on 10 GHz given at the September club meeting.

<https://www.facebook.com/PackRatVHF/videos/1271818414139048>

Beacon News

The 3400.30 MHz beacon is back on the air from Pottstown FN20dh. After sending the report there is about 15 to 17 seconds of dead time each minute.

The start of key down is still at the top of each minute, followed by our call and grid, so we still have plenty of useful key down time, just less key down than before. Signal reports are being solicited by Gary WA2OMY. Thanks to all who were involved in this project.

Packrats on Facebook

Did you know the PackRats have a public "community organization" page on Facebook?

Use the browser link "www.facebook.com/PackRatVHF", or within Facebook search for the name "Mt Airy VHF Radio Club".

This Facebook page is *not* a substitute for our website (packratvhf.com) or our email reflectors. It is currently used for two purposes: to have a location to host videos of some of our meetings and presentations, and to allow Facebook users to search and find us. If someone sends a message to the page, either I, Pete K0BAK, (usually) or Phil K3TUF can answer as the club; we are the two admins for the page. In most cases I encourage the person to visit our website for more information. I can usually answer most questions directly, but if there's a technical question over my head, I encourage them to join our public email reflector and ask there.

Originally, Phil created the page as an early method to livestream our meetings. A lack of Wi-Fi capacity at Ben Wilson at that time prevented consistent live video performance. As a stopgap, for a while I recorded meetings on my phone and uploaded them to Facebook soon after; you may remember my announcements about those meeting videos on

the reflector during that time. Now, Zoom is a better way to stream our meetings, but we kept the Facebook presence.

In Memorium

It is with great sadness that I report that Joel Knoblock passed October 2nd. Joel was a friend to the packrats and a solid aid to the whole radio community. He and his service to us will be greatly missed. Not only did he provide a great service to all hams, but he was a solid and steady contributor to the vhf contest community with reliable contacts during contests.

We lost another great one!

73,
Phil **K3TUF**

Fall Sprint Wrap-up

The last of the VHF Fall Sprints will take place Saturday October 5th. This is the 902 and Up Sprint. The hours are 8 AM local to 2 PM. Go to the link <https://www.packratvhf.com/index.php/fall-sprints> for further information.

Storm Damage at DEMI

Sandra and Stephen are OK but the shop (barn) had it's roof removed by what might have been a tornado that didn't touch the ground.

Stephen thinks that Down East Microwave will be out of business until at least the first of the year.

Warren **WB2ONA**

Notes from the Editor

As usual my thanks to all of the contributing authors and photographers. If you submit photographs please include some text explaining what is going on in the picture. Special thanks to my wife Melanie who proof reads each issue and offers corrections. Please do not send submissions to my personal email account as they are likely to get lost and not make it into Cheese Bits. Instead please send all submissions to cheesebits@packratvhf.com.

Tom **KA3FQS**

First Attempt at POTA Park on Microwaves

Pete **K0BAK**

As I wrote in Cheese Bits earlier in the year, Gary WA2OMY built a compact 5-band QRP microwave transverter to replace the old multi-band transverter used for many years for short-distance contacts during contests. Among several enhancements, Gary's box uses just one antenna output, simplifying its use for portable operations. He supplied a hand-sized printed circuit log periodic antenna that can be mounted on the transverter's top-facing N-connector. This small antenna works well for the box's typical use on short distance contacts at Pack Rat stations but has also made contacts of 10-20km with superstations K3TUF and N3NGE.

The distances achieved on near-ideal pathways made me think it could also make contacts from Valley Forge National Historical Park to Gary's station only 6km away. As a POTA park activation enthusiast with more than 1000 park activations logged, I was looking forward to possibly being the first to make the POTA-minimum 10 contacts (SSB & CW) only on microwave bands. Unfortunately, the effort failed to make even one contact; although I could see Gary's carrier on a couple bands, my tiny signal didn't get through at all to Gary through heavy vegetation and an intervening hill.

Wanting to extend my range, I looked for an inexpensive wideband microwave antenna. I was surprised to find grid parabolic antennas driven by an enclosed log periodic from two vendors on Amazon. Their intended use was for wifi and cell signals, but the barely technical specs of one of them claimed three frequency ranges that included four ham bands with a fifth band in between published ranges where it would probably also work. I bought and assembled the "Griddy" antenna from "Waveform", then verified I could mount the 24x39" antenna on my 2" snap-together portable mast system. My intention was to use a large foldable tripod made for those 2" mast sections to enable me to quickly set up the antenna on the ground just outside my Forrester and connect it to Gary's transverter with a 4-foot length of LMR 400. While

I originally assembled it according to the vendor's instructions, later I would turn the mounting bracket so the log periodic would be oriented horizontally.

After verifying that the antenna worked in Gary's driveway on all five bands, later that day I set it up in the parking lot near Washington' Chapel in Valley Forge Park. Having already found an aiming point on satellite view, I also verified the heading to Gary's with a phone app called Theodolite (see pic). With considerable difficulty we made contacts on the lowest three bands, but the upper two were elusive. Getting so close but not making all 5 bands was frustrating, but the important take-away was that the parabolic definitely helped to go from 0 to 3 band contacts over the same path. Would a better or shorter coax make a difference? Should I consider a cheap (but likely dirty) wideband microwave amplifier I found from a Chinese vendor to transmit 13db more power?



wideband grid parabolic aiming with Theodolite phone app

Thanks to Gary for this interesting introduction into low power microwave operation. I really appreciate his patience and time with me, especially given my low technical knowledge.

September Contest



The Glowing Red Pagoda Overlooks the City of Reading PA During My Rove

AA2SD/R Rover Visits the Reading Pagoda and Welsh Mountain Overlooks During the 2 Mtr Sprint

2 Mtr Spring Summary Rover AA2SD/R Sept 9 2024 - Fellow Pack Rats and Friends, it was a quick night for the Sprint and I was able to make my (2) elevated overlook locations with several QSO's and get back home at 11PM. I had some issues with some cables at the first overlook and corrected the problem. This location is also a magnet for "modified tuner" loud Japanese cars with no mufflers during the evening. The bands for me were not in the best condition, and I did experience heavy QRM at the Reading PA Pagoda location. I was also able to work a number of local contacts on return ride over simplex.

A special thanks to Allen K3WGR who came over to the Pagoda to drop off some antennas for future Rover use, these will most definitely get on the air to support the club. Here is a quick video of the day, sorry no QSO on air videos, it was a short sprint session and did not have a lot of time to drive, video, work stations and set up antennas.

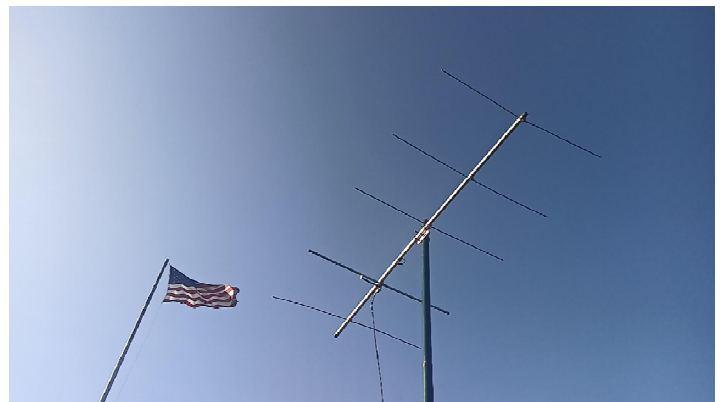
Working a sprint at a quick pace, as a Rover is a challenge to time your overlook locations and get your an-

tennas set up in time for the contest and stay on schedule for contacts. Going for "ease of set up" and speed, I only brought a single fiberglass push pole, no rotor and a second stack of 2 mtr halos for convenience.

I look forward to working with you during the upcoming Sept VHF Contest from the Poconos this coming weekend, and will publish a schedule at the end of the week.

Follow the You Tube Here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgP48VQdkqs>



KOBAK's better-than-June September Rove

I had hoped for a rove in the September contest like June's, but with more operating time due to changing from my fatigue-inducing IV antibiotics to a gentler oral antibiotic. While fatigue and foot pain were still a factor, I hoped I could significantly increase my operating time while using the same rover configuration: Halo antennas and ~100w on 6m and 2m, Gary's five-band 1mW microwave transverter for driveway contacts, and a 3-band FM HT for quick driveway Qs on 144,222,432. The theme of the September rove was the unavailability of stations I drove to in June or in previous January contests. Only three Rats were operating that responded to my request for driveway visits. Thanks to Gary WA2OMY, Jim KC3BVL, and Doc W3GAD.

Initially I was reluctant to visit Jim because his station is in a West Philly rowhome, so I was concerned about finding parking close enough. We talked about me parking on the roof of a hospital

September Contest

garage (HUP-Cedar Ave, formerly Mercy formerly Misericordia), but I couldn't fit in the garage with my halo antennas 10 feet high. After thinking about contest goals and the reality of my improved but still limited daily energy, I decided to solve the problem by taking down the halos for the Sunday rove. It would be unlikely I'd have the stamina to do a 5-hour rove then operate on 6 & 2. I decided Saturday would be exclusively for conventional random contacts from multiple grids, and Sunday would only be for visiting Rats.

My usual pattern of visiting N3NGE and K3TUF on Saturday evening for cross-grid microwave contacts was dashed, so I spent my available energy activating the grids around Gap PA on Saturday: FM19, FN10, FM29, FN20. Except for a new location for FM19 that I first tried during the 144 Sprint (the Monday before), the other locations were tried -and-true. I didn't spend much time looking for SSB, since that gets rarer every contest, so I settled in to watch the WSJT screen. There was enough activity on 6m to stay engaged, and there was a little on 2m FT8 too. The only sideband contact I made was with W2EA. I did miss the shooting -fish-in-a-barrel ease of making every FT8 contact with a -20dB signal or better in my old TV van, but I didn't miss the setup time at each location and ladder climbing.

More power on 6m would have helped to be heard. As in June, I used a 12vdc TE Systems amplifier that was supposedly factory-modified from a model 0552G to a 0550G, which is supposed to produce 375w with "5-10w" in. Instead, this amp tops out at 100w. Gary OMY generously looked at the amp to see if he could find any obvious problems; his improved input tuning allowed marginally more power but nothing like 375. My 2m TE amp has the same output rating for 20-25w input; even with just 10w from my IC-705, I get a 175w carrier from the 2m amp when it should have less gain than my 6 amp. Sigh. I own a kilowatt 6m amp that was used in my old van, but that requires a large 50vdc battery and two rack shelves. Looks like I'll have to work on getting the kilowatt installed if I'm going to com-

plete a better percentage of 6m contacts, but that's going to take a lot of room from my compact -car-sized Forrester SUV.

Getting up early on Sunday allowed me to remove the halos on my hitch-mounted tilt-over mast system as planned. I arrived on time to Gary's at 9AM, and unsurprisingly made all 5 microwave contacts from his transverter box. Since he had trouble making FM contacts on 144 through 432, I brought him a second copy of the HT I use so we could run those bands quickly. The night before I had installed my fancy short-distance antenna used for POTA contacts from 160m to 70cm (a 2.5 -foot wire), and I switched to that antenna to make the final contact on 6m SSB at Gary's and at my other two stops.

The next stop would be to Jim in West Philly. The unpredictable Schuylkill Expressway was flowing unusually well, until having to take an early exit to avoid a backup. Winding past the Mann Center and into the moonscape streets of West Philly, it was a predicably slow drive to the hospital near Jim's place. With only a few cars on the roof of the garage, it was easy to position the microwave log periodic antenna to point to Jim's rooftop antenna farm (see pic). After a couple unanswered phone calls that started to raise concern, I was able to talk to Jim and watch his antennas rotate to me. All contacts were easy on Jim's bands (all except 3400), including 5G which has sometimes been a problem. As at Gary's, HT Qs and my short 6m wire completed the 4 low bands.

Operating on the garage roof was a fun stunt. The last time I operated from a Philly rooftop was on top of the Franklin Institute in 2016 making NPOTA contacts along with a small crew I assembled from South Jersey and Perry County PA.

The trip to Doc's place was almost an hour, with a long eastward city drive crossing through West Philly and Center City to I-95N. My visits to Doc's station always take longer than other stops, but at least I wasn't on a strict schedule compared to when I have 8 to 10 Rats to visit in a day. We

September Contest

made all his bands (up to 2304). Doc's happy dog "Diva" demanded my attention while Doc and I were making our HT contacts.

As I was driving the 50 minutes back home, I was thinking that I was a bit tired, but maybe I could later put my halos back on and make a few more contacts from my local high spot. That idea collapsed as soon as I could sit down at home, when I realized how utterly exhausted I was. I might have been able to visit a few more Rats near the same route, but overall I think I gave my maximum effort given the energy I had. Hopefully I'll gain enough stamina to give a lot more Rats microwave contacts in the January contest.

Rove distance: 209 miles

Claimed score: 5304

| Band | QSOs | Pts | Grids |
|-------------|------|-----|-------|
| 50 | 64 | 64 | 16 |
| 144 | 18 | 18 | 6 |
| 222 | 3 | 6 | 2 |
| 420 | 3 | 6 | 2 |
| 902 | 3 | 9 | 2 |
| 1240 | 3 | 9 | 2 |
| 2300 | 3 | 12 | 2 |
| 3300 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| 5650 | 2 | 8 | 2 |
| activations | | | 4 |
| Total | 100 | 136 | 39 |



Diva interfering with HT contacts at W3GAD



two halos at FM19xx



view of KC2BVL antennas from hospital garage roof

Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club The Pack Rats` 2024 September VHF Contest

| Call | QSOs | Total Grids | Score | 6M | Contacts and Grids per band | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|------|----------------|--------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| | | | | | 2M | 222 | 432 | 902/3 | 1.3GHz | 2.3GHz | 3.4GHz | 5.7GHz | 10GHz | Laser | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K1RZ | 446 | 214 | 154080 | 113 | 52 | 136 | 51 | 66 | 33 | 70 | 33 | 20 | 15 | 25 | 15 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | | |
| WN3A | 533 | 169 | 104104 | 258 | 64 | 194 | 55 | 40 | 26 | 39 | 22 | | | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| WB2RVX | 222 | 116 | 39440 | 65 | 23 | 63 | 33 | 35 | 21 | 40 | 23 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| N2SCJ | 299 | 74 | 29602 | 130 | 20 | 115 | 32 | 8 | 2 | 38 | 15 | | | 8 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | |
| W2KV | 187 | 77 | 18942 | 40 | 16 | 88 | 35 | 8 | 6 | 51 | 20 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| W9KXI | 171 | 85 | 16235 | 76 | 31 | 75 | 39 | 4 | 4 | 16 | 11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| WA3NUJF | 159 | 69 | 14352 | 73 | 23 | 42 | 17 | 12 | 8 | 29 | 18 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| K3MD | 147 | 67 | 10787 | 79 | 27 | 54 | 29 | | | 14 | 11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| W2SJ | 132 | 48 | 8592 | 75 | 22 | 18 | 7 | 14 | 7 | 17 | 7 | | | 8 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | |
| AA2SD/R | - | - | 7660 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K2LNS | 109 | 56 | 6944 | 47 | 20 | 47 | 26 | | | 15 | 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| WB3IGR | 82 | 56 | 6608 | 20 | 10 | 32 | 22 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| KC3BVL | 83 | 43 | 5891 | 14 | 7 | 29 | 13 | 7 | 4 | 21 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| K0BAK/R | 100 | 39 | 5304 | 64 | 16 | 18 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | | | |
| N2DEQ | 85 | 44 | 4092 | 51 | 21 | 26 | 16 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| WG3K | 50 | 38 | 2622 | 7 | 4 | 25 | 18 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | |
| W3GAD | 37 | 25 | 1825 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | |
| KE5NJ/R | - | - | 1680 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K1DS | 10 | 7 | 112 | | | 5 | 3 | | | 4 | 3 | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |

| Multi-Ops Call | QSOs | Total Grids | Score | 6M | Contacts and Grids per band | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------|----------------|--------|------|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | 2M | 222 | 432 | 902/3 | 1.3GHz | 2.3GHz | 3.4GHz | 5.7GHz | 10GHz | Laser | | | | | | | | | | |
| NZNT | 643 | 173 | 136324 | 277 | 61 | 221 | 57 | 57 | 26 | 88 | 29 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ops: | NZNT | NZNC | W2RQ | WW2Y | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

September Contest

Dave **K1RZ**

September VHF Contest had better than average propagation conditions. Worked VE1SKY FN74 at 1160 km on Sunday evening - thanks Sky.

Worked the Brazilian stations on 50 MHz FT8 Sunday evening. My new tower is just about complete. Made ten band runs with WB2RVX and W2SZ. Getting better at changing from analog to digital and back. Appreciating more and more the fun of analog versus the DX capability of digital.

Many Rovers were out and workable here in the Mid-Atlantic - Calls (QSOs/Grids): KE5NJ (6/2), AA2SD (8/2), N2SLN (8/2), K3IP(former N2XRE) (14/3), KC0IYT (3/1), KC8JPZ (5), K0BAK (1/1), KM4OZH (3/3), KK4BZ (4/2), VE3OIL (6/2), AB4CR (5/1), KD3PD (12/2) and KG6CIH (5/1). Thank you ROVERS!! Go ROVERS! We all know it is lot of effort, but the rest of us really appreciate you for it.

So again, I appreciate being able to operate after being off for a couple years, connecting with so many VHFers again, being on when the bands are enhanced, shifting modes to be able to complete a contact, and checking the gear to see where more work needs to be done. Working closely with others to be sure the antennas are pointed properly, etc. That was this weekend.

Thanks to the ARRL Contest Organization for sponsoring this event. And thanks to everyone who got on and to those who worked me.

| Band | Mode | QSOs | Pts | Grd | Pt/Q |
|-------|------|------|-----|-----|------|
| 50 | CW | 6 | 6 | 5 | 1.0 |
| 50 | FT8 | 67 | 67 | 30 | 1.0 |
| 50 | MSK1 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 1.0 |
| 50 | USB | 32 | 32 | 10 | 1.0 |
| 144 | CW | 9 | 9 | 3 | 1.0 |
| 144 | FT8 | 85 | 85 | 35 | 1.0 |
| 144 | MSK1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1.0 |
| 144 | USB | 41 | 41 | 12 | 1.0 |
| 222 | CW | 17 | 34 | 10 | 2.0 |
| 222 | FT8 | 13 | 26 | 11 | 2.0 |
| 222 | USB | 36 | 72 | 12 | 2.0 |
| 420 | CW | 13 | 26 | 5 | 2.0 |
| 420 | FT8 | 20 | 40 | 12 | 2.0 |
| 420 | USB | 37 | 74 | 16 | 2.0 |
| 902 | CW | 9 | 27 | 9 | 3.0 |
| 902 | FM | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3.0 |
| 902 | USB | 10 | 30 | 6 | 3.0 |
| 1240 | CW | 12 | 36 | 10 | 3.0 |
| 1240 | FT8 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3.0 |
| 1240 | USB | 12 | 36 | 5 | 3.0 |
| 2300 | CW | 4 | 16 | 4 | 4.0 |
| 2300 | Q65 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 4.0 |
| 2300 | USB | 2 | 8 | 2 | 4.0 |
| 3300 | CW | 3 | 12 | 3 | 4.0 |
| 5650 | CW | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4.0 |
| 5650 | USB | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4.0 |
| 10000 | CW | 1 | 4 | 1 | 4.0 |
| 10000 | USB | 3 | 12 | 3 | 4.0 |

Scott **AA2SD**

Thanks to all that worked me from the Poconos and the ride back home during the September VHF Contest. Although the band conditions were not great, I was able to hit all of my planned grids over the 2 day period. I visited FN11 in the evening and again in the morning. The Big Pocono State Park site proved again to be a great location with 70 QSO's during the first 3 hours of operation. Although my score is low, my main objective is to support and promote low signal "phone" VHF activity and test "quick" antenna setups for operation. This trip I also tested some stationary mobile FT8 during the early morning hours successfully.

Thank you to all club members that supported me, and I look forward to working you from the field during the January VHF contest.

Follow the You Tube Here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hg-QSR9NT0>

Grids and Rove Summary

- FN21HB Big Pocono State Park
- FN11WA Overlook Lookout Motor Lodge Drums
- FN10WW Overlook
- FN20DV Penns Peak Overlook
- FM29 Drive Home
-

QSOs in Log : 162 40 Multis 7,760 points

As a Rover it is a challenge to time your overlook locations and get your antennas set up in time for the contest and stay on schedule for contacts. Going for "ease of set up" and speed, I only brought a single fiberglass push pole, no rotor for the 3 Grids after the first set up at FN21

I look forward to working with you during the upcoming January VHF Contest

73 Scott
AA2SD

10 GHz and Up Contest Pictures



10 GHz and Up Contest Pictures



Warren WB2ONA and Doug WA2LTM, each with their own rig. Operated from New Brunswick NJ area 9/22/24. Photographer W2BVH. Helper and kibbitzer Aram Friedman (astronomer, not a ham).
Lenny **W2BVH**

September Meeting

A pre-meeting dinner was held at Giuseppe's. Sixteen Packrats enjoyed Dutch Treat dinner prior to the September club meeting. We can do it again in October and look forward to seeing many of you there at 6PM on Thursday, October 17th. Bring cash to pay for your dinner and remember to include beverages, side dishes, tax and a generous tip for the servers



The featured presentation was getting on 10 GHz with commercial equipment by Phil K3TUF. This presentation can be viewed on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/PackRatVHF/videos/1271818414139048>. Thanks to Bob W2SJ for saving the Zoom video.

Hamcation 2024

Rick K1DS

I wasn't really ready to head to Hamcation this past February because I was only 2-months post-op from hip replacement surgery. I saw that a few local club members were carpooling and had room for me, so I joined them and hoped to be able to rent a power scooter onsite. Once we arrived and parked, we were close to the rental tent, but I was told that they only had enough for those who had reserved them. No matter, I was able to get rides from the helpers who had golf carts for the longer runs across the area from the entry to the seminar rooms. My favorite place to hang out before and after attending the various presentations was "VHF row" as I describe it, and here are some of the people you meet.



There are plenty of commercial vendors, vintage radios, antennas, radios, parts, indoor and outdoor with lots of options for food and snacks. Parking is free. <https://www.hamcation.com/>

The Wayback Machine

In CHEESE BITS, October, 1974. Vol. XVI, #10
de Bert, **K3IUU** (*author's comments in italics*)

“**Our Prez Sez**”. Prez Ron, **W3RJW** encouraged the members to help and support the effort at the upcoming Hamarama (*See the included picture. Did you know the first Packrat Hamarama was in 1972?*). He listed the committee chairman for the event activities (*and I note two are still active*). He noted that indoor meetings resume in October at the library, with the first of many fine meetings planned by Tony, **W3HMU**. (*We understand Tony is in poor health – anyone have a status update.*)

Calendar of Events. The Packrat Hamarama is scheduled for October 6, at the Bucks County Drive-in Theater. (*The included picture shows the huge crowd that attended.*) (*Did you know that the ashes of **K3MXM**, Lee, the Chairman, are spread on that site, which is now a shopping center?*) Oct 17, first indoor meeting with speaker **W2REB**, George and topic “Radio and Amateur adventures in Iran” (*!!!*). Oct 19 – 20, Boy Scout Jamboree on the Air.

New Products of Interest to Hams. **W3NSI**, Lynn somehow always managed to find several interesting new items. This issue included: **1). Symtek** has a new line of receiver preamps for 160 through two-meters. Using a MOS-FET front end, and rated at 20 dB gain with 2.5dB noise figure typical. Price is \$15.95. **2). Kris, Inc.** now has a pocket size scanner receiver available. The “Hand-Skan” is 6-1/2 x 2-3/4 x 1-1/4” and includes 6 AA batteries. Frequency range is 146 – 174 MHz which can be set to any 8-MHz segment. Price is \$119.

VHF Report. Joe, **W2EIF** noted that activity on the bands continues to be quiet. The September contest had lots of cw activity. Joe worked 21 sections, and missed a new station, **K4KAE**, active in S Carolina. He noted that Bruce, **K2RTH** worked two sections on moonbounce (*50 years ago*). 432 activity has been hampered by radar interference (*used to be a big problem*). A September 15 Aurora session provided contacts from Maine, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin. And **WA2BIT** snared **WOEMS** in Nebraska.

This is Your Life (Part #3, Our First VHF Contest). In this issue, Frankie, **W3SAO** continued to present the history of the Packrats. In 1957, we entered our first contest, with 27 members participating. He listed the calls and contact details. First place was taken by Ernie, **W3KKN** who had 339 contacts and 12 sections! The Treasurer reported \$48.70 on hand. The Prez, Ozzie, **W3FSC** announced formation of a novice training class. At the next meeting in February, Frankie, **W3SAO** demonstrated a Conelrad monitor (*who remembers them?*) and an SWR bridge. Frankie noted that the club applied for and was granted the call **W3CCX** as a memorial to our first silent key, Matt Gelardi.

Oscar 7 Launch Scheduled. Scheduled for launch on October 3, the new Oscar 7 is the most complex amateur radio satellite built so far. It contains two repeaters and two auxiliary beacons, as well as Morse Code and Telemetry encoders. The two to ten-meter repeater has an output of two watts, so signals should be much improved compared to Oscar 6. It has an input of 432-MHz and an output on 146 MHz. Beacons will be at 435.1 and 2304 MHz. 100 watts ERP will still be the maximum power allowed for transmission through Oscar 7. Get ready!

Official Bulletin Nr 500 From ARRL Headquarters. September 12, 1974 to all Radio Amateurs BT: The deadlines for filing comments on several subjects are getting near. These include Filing Fees, Repeater linking, Automatic control of repeaters and several other topics. Amateurs are urged to get their

comments in promptly to ensure they are considered.

145 MHz AM Activity, by K3ZSG (now W0RSJ).

Bill reported an interesting statistic. The previous decline in AM activity has recently reversed, and a large number of stations may be found between 145 and 145.8 MHz, using AM. Partly due to crowded simplex channels on FM, and partly due to some frequent DX stations from different states (e.g., **K1SAK** in Rhode Island on 145.025, and **W4JFU** in Virginia) who are on nightly. He reports that in the past year of his nightly operations he logged over 435 different stations (non-contest) on 2-meter AM. (*How times change!!*)

Technical Topic – Mobile on the Packrat

Repeater. **K3DLS**, Carl, reported on his experiences getting mobile operation going on the new Packrat repeater. Carl got one of the new Clegg FM-21 units and a roof mount 5/8 wavelength whip antenna. He notes his route down the Schuylkill expressway to Passayunk Avenue yielded “copying the mail” from **W2AXU** in Trenton to **W2EIF** in south Jersey. He’s been working **W3CL** frequently “with full quieting” and others “with a little difficulty.” An appended note mentioned an additional 220 repeater now on in Trevoise, on 223.14 /224.74.

BARCC Meeting Report. The Packrats were involved in the planning for the Bicentennial Amateur Radio Conference scheduled for 1976. They met in September at the planned site, the Ben Franklin Hotel in Philadelphia. Over 50 delegates and guests were present. They included Ed Clegg, **W2LOY** and the Atlantic Division Director **W3SW**. The Chairman was Dave, **W3ZD**, who called for progress reports from all committees. The hotel management provided a walk-through of the planned facilities.

Swap Shoppe. By Ray, W3ZRR. (*Always nostalgia. Now we use the club reflector.*) For sale by John, **WA3ERQ**, an HT40 transmitter (80 – 6 meters) for \$30. From Doc, **K3GAS**, a Motorola 19” TV (cart included) for \$35, and an Ampro 16-mm sound projector (with film) for \$125. Wanted by Gordon, **K3VYG**, an 876

Regulator tube. And wanted by Jack, **W2GQK**, an NCX3, SR160 or similar Transceiver (need not be working!).

Ads. *This issue included 24 “business card” ads, including many from HAM businesses that are “no longer there.” Also included was the half page back cover ad from club member Ham Buerger; however, no sale details were included. I note the current Cheese Bits Ad complement includes only 4 small ads, a ¼ page from Beko and a ½ page from Down East. If you’d like to join them, contact the ad chairman, Bob, **W2SJ**.*

Miscellany. *Postage for this issue was a single 8-cent “Flag” stamp. (6 double sided, 8-½ x 11” sheets). (Don’t forget, current postage went to 73-cents in July of 2024! And a penny postcard now costs 56 cents!) As usual, many other “folksy” comments about members, their families, and activities were included in this edition of Cheese Bits. If interested, or for more detail on any of the above items, visit our website (www.W3CCX.COM) and read the full issue scanned by **K3IUU** (me), and posted on the website by Bill, **WS30**, our webmaster. I have also posted the club Officers history, club Membership history, and Packrat Inventory (updated frequently) on the **W3CCX** website. These files are password protected, and only accessible to registered members. Are you registered? I hope you enjoyed reading these bits of nostalgia as much as I did in writing the article. If yes, you might let me know. Thanks to those that did.*

thirty, de **K3IUU** (comments or corrections to: K3IUU@ARRL.net)



W3UU - Harrisburg Radio Amateurs' Club OktoberFest

Saturday October 26th, 2024



OKTOBERFEST

Electronics Expo and Hamfest



Vietnam Veterans of America
 8000 Derry Street
 Harrisburg, PA 17111
 7:00 am to 11:00 am

- 🍂 Admission \$5.00 per person
- 🍂 Sellers can tailgate in parking lot or have table(s) inside;
- 🍂 Tables inside - \$5.00 each.
- 🍂 Tailgate spot - \$5.00 each.
- 🍂 DXCC/WAS/UCC QSL card checking on site.
- 🍂 Coffee and snacks available.

No reserved table space.

Unloading can be done at the main doors, and then move vehicle to parking area.



For further information contact:

Terry Snyder
 717-979-9515
 PO BOX 355
 Halifax, PA 17032
WB3BKN1@gmail.com
 Web Site: www.w3uu.org



* Save the Date! - W3UU WinterFest is January 11, 2025

Upcoming Contests

PA QSO Party Saturday, 12 **October**
 (1600 UTC - 0400 UTC) - Sunday, 13
 October (1300 UTC - 2200 UTC)

NY State QSO Party Saturday, 19 **October**
 (10 AM Eastern) lasting 12 hours

UK 6M Group Winter contest Sunday, 01
December, 2024 (0000 UTC) - Friday, 31
 January, 2025 (23:59:59 UTC)

Regularly Scheduled On The Air Events

VHF/UHF Monday - Every Monday except holidays and contest nights the following nets are held, 224.9 MHz FM Repeater at 6:45, Packrat Talk Group DMR net at 7:00 PM, 50.150 MHz USB NCS N3RG FM29ki at 7:30 PM, 144.250 MHz USB NCS W2KV FN20os at 8:00

1296 MHz Activity Night—There's an informal 1296 activity night in the NY/NJ/PA/CT region (and beyond) every Monday night starting around 9:30 pm (or so) on 1296.110. No coordination, just jump in and say hello W2BVH

222 MHz Activity Night—There's been an informal 222 activity night in the Northeast (and beyond) every Tuesday night starting around 7 pm (or so) Eastern Time. ON4KST is being used by some to coordinate Q's when direct CQ's are weak. W2BVH

KC3BVL UHF+ Wednesday Net—Packrat, Jim KC3BVL conducts a Wednesday night net with schedule as follows: 7:30PM—903.100, 8:00PM—1296.100, 8:30PM—2304.100

KC3BVL VHF Friday Net—Packrat, Jim KC3BVL conducts a Friday night net with schedule as follows: 7:30PM-144.160, 8:00PM-50.160, 8:30PM-222.150, 9:00PM-432.160

Links to other Activities

Reminder: there are 3 FT8 VHF / UHF Activity Contests each month. For info see: <http://www.ft8activity.eu/index.php/en/>

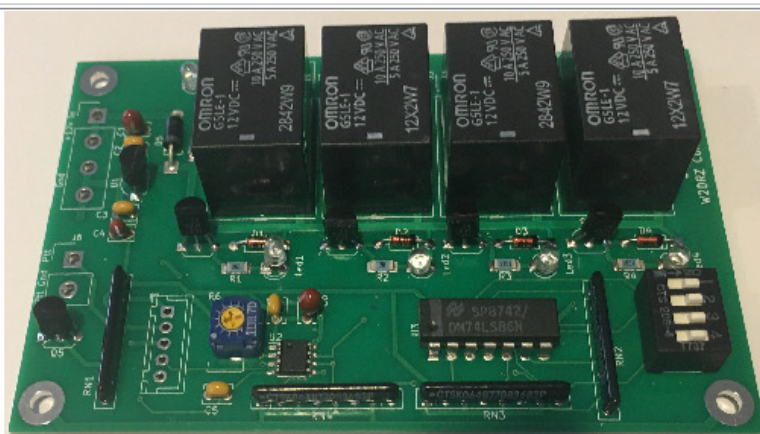
For those interested in an online "Contest Only" event calendar for VHF+, see <https://www.qsl.net/n2sln/contestcalendar.html>

Here's a Meteor Shower Calendar showing the dates for all the Meteor Showers in 2024. They're correct for our location in the Northeast. <https://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/meteor-shower/list.html>

The Packrat web page now has a dedicated tab for the Fall Sprints <https://www.packratvhf.com/index.php/fall-sprints>. This page will be used for Fall Sprint announcements, Sprint Rules publication, sprint awards recognition and other sprint news of interest. Check back as work progresses.

W2DRZ Controllers New Product Announcements

SEQ-3 Sequencer



Our Sequencers, SEQ1 and SEQ2, have proven quite popular and we have sold almost all that have been made. But we discovered a small problem with the original design that caused a random time delay when activating or releasing the PTT line. The delay is not very noticeable except when using slow sequence rates. But we felt that this required a new design. The new design uses an interrupt driven microprocessor that instantly responds to changes on the PTT input.

Savings on board cost and component reduction have allowed us to reduce the price from the original \$67 to \$59 for the new SEQ3.

See our web pages for full information about these sequencers: www.w2drzControllers.k2txb.net/NewProducts.htm

Kenwood TS-2000 services

We are now able to offer some limited repair service for owners of the venerable Kenwood TS-2000 transceiver.

1. Repair failed back lighting of the digital display, by installing LED lights (with necessary circuit changes).
2. Replace old backup battery.
3. Adjust master oscillator to be within 20 Hz of correct frequency on 2 meters. (for higher bands the error will be greater due to increased drift with fan operation).
4. Fan Modifications.
5. Fix incorrect 1296 MHz output module bias, in early models.
6. Fixing other faults, details to be worked out, but on a case-by-case basis.
7. See our service page for more details: www.w2drzControllers.k2txb.net/Services

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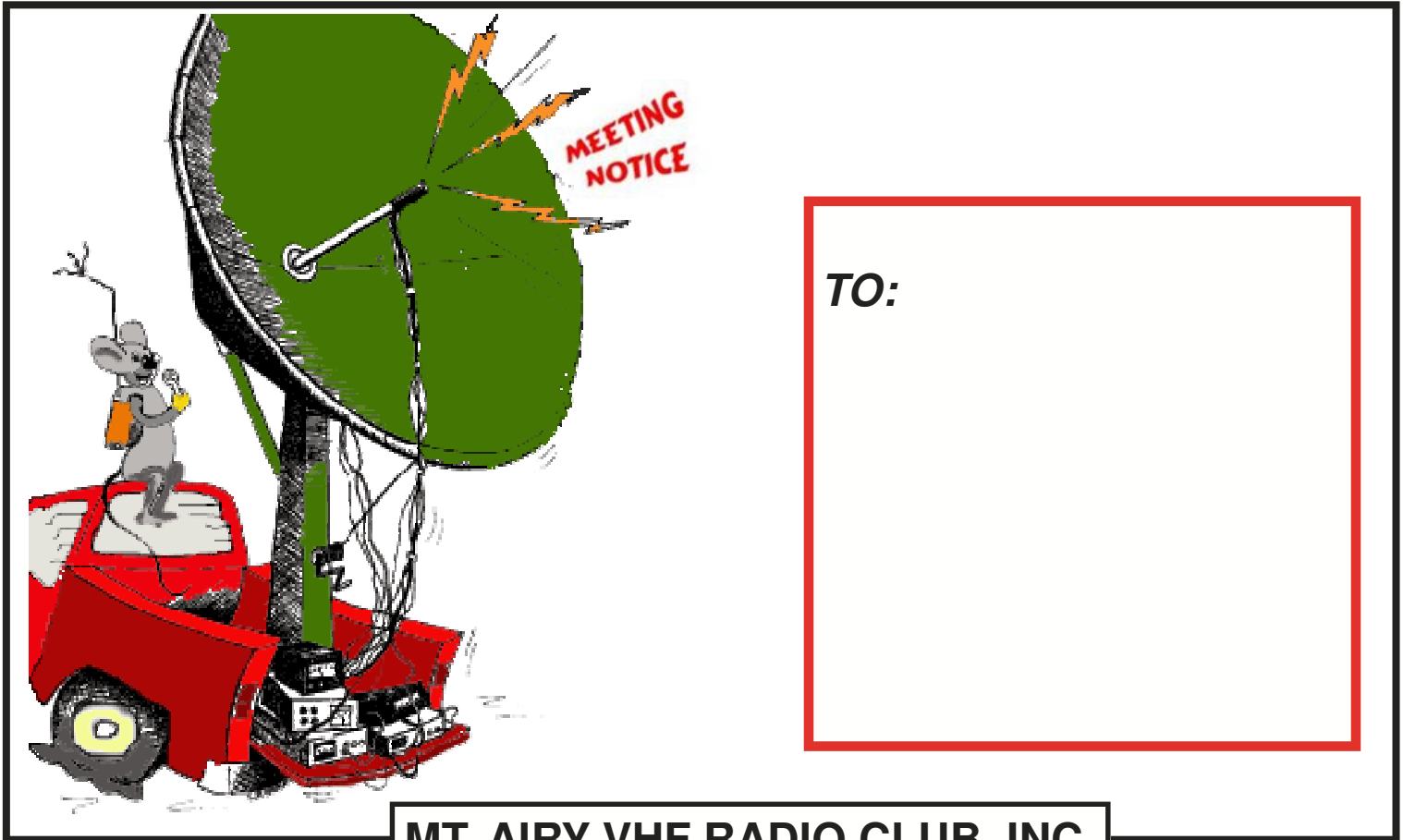
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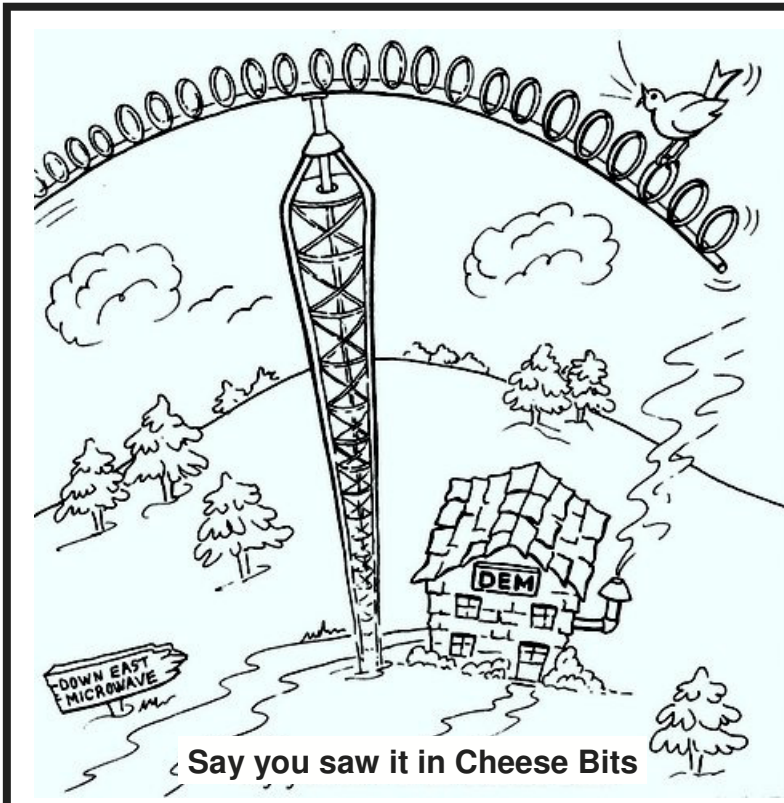
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