



CHEESE BITS

W3CCX

CLUB MEMORIAL CALL

ARRL
Affiliated
Club



CELEBRATING 50 years of VHF/UHF and MICROWAVE
DEVELOPMENT and COMPETITION in 2006

Volume XLVII

MARCH 2006

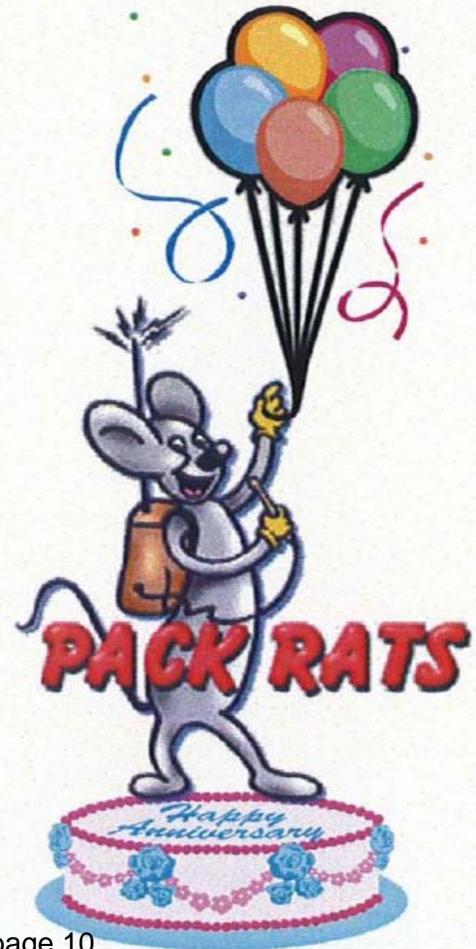
Number 03

**You're invited
to the
Mt Airy VHF Radio Club
50th Anniversary
Dinner-Dance
Celebration
Sat, April 1, 2006**

**Williamson's Restaurant, 500 Blair Mill Rd
at the intersection of Rte 611,
Horsham, PA 215-675-5454
Displays & Cash Bar Cocktails 6:30 PM
Dinner 7:15 PM
Guest Speaker & Presentations 8:15 PM
The party continues with dancing
and socialization \$40.00 per person**



- A fun evening for all members, friends and family with your Packrat friends
- Displays of Packrat history and technology
- Unique anniversary souvenirs for all attendees
- Special Guest speaker
- Choice menu: beef, poultry, fish
- Make your reservation now by returning the enclosed form and payment-**Deadline March 15, 2006**



To make reservations contact Rick Rosen K1DS. see information on page 10

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222.98/224.58 MHz, Churchville, PA

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PACKRAT BEACONS - W3CCX/B

FM29jw Philadelphia, PA

50.080, 144.284, 222.065, 432.295, 903.071, 1296.251,
 2304.037, 3456.220, 5763.190, 10,368.140 MHz (as of 3/1/01)

MONDAY NIGHT NETS

<u>TIME</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>NET CONTROL</u>
7:30 PM	50.150 MHz	K3EOD FM29II
8:00 PM	144.150 MHz	N3ITT FN20kl
8:30 PM	222.125 MHz	K3TUF FN10we
8:30 PM	224.58R MHz	W3GXB FN20jm
9:00 PM	432.110 MHz	WA3GFZ FN20kc
9:30 PM	1296.100 MHz	WA3NUF FN20le
10:00 PM	903.125 MHz	AA3GN FN20ig
10:30 PM	2304.085 MHz	W3KJ FN20hg

& go to 3.4G & up after

Visit the Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club at:

<http://www.ij.net/packrats>

Editor's Column

Welcome to march. Time has been flying by and we are all looking forward to the arrival of Spring. The PACK-RATS 50th Anniversary Celebration is just around the corner, Sprint Sprints will be starting in only a few week and the June contest is just 3 short months away.

I am hearing a lot of positive responses from long absent PACKRATS about planning to come and join in on the celebration.

The hamfest season is underway. There is already talk and planning for the trip to Dayton but don't forget the smaller hamfests with lots of wonderful stuff from basement cleanouts and estates.

The annual W3CCX trip to CAMELBACK Mountain for the June VHF QSO Party seems so far away but, in reality, it will be here very soon. Clear your calendar and get your chores done so you can have the weekend free to help with this major club effort. We need plenty of help on Friday and Saturday for setting up and getting on the air plus just as much help Sunday with fresh operators and early Monday morning for the tear-down and stowing of all the gear for another year. Mark the dates of June 9th through 12th so you don't forget. I know it's fun to work the guys on the mountain but we need the operators and the muscle on the mountain to make it a fun experience for everyone. I can personally guarantee there will be plenty of food to support all your efforts.

The January scores are listed in this issue. (NOTE: you will find them easier to read if you turn the CheeseBits on it's side when you get to those pages Hi! Hi!.) As is quite evident that everyone's efforts contributed to making those over 2.7 million points. That is not just the points from your log but the cumulative results your efforts had on the logs of others. I looked at the total scores and know I need to make more improvements for the fall contest season and next January. I figure if I worked everyone I heard then I need to hear better.

I have been getting requests for a wants and needs space in the newsletter. As you can see this issue is larger than usual. Unfortunately, we are limited in the sized due to postal weight restrictions for first class. I will try to get a website up for wants and needs with the approval of the Board of Directors. I may be able to start that listing in the next week or so.

It is with regret that I learned of the passing of my CW mentor Frank Kerns K2FK formerly AK3O. Frank recently passed away and had been inactive due to his bout with cancer and a stroke. More recently we learned of the passing of Joseph Cipko, WA2ZFH on 10 Feb in New York. Joseph was a long time friend of K2DZM who is a regular in our nets.

I know it is difficult to check in to all the Monday evening Nets but it is a good idea to try to make one or 2 each week so you can keep up on the activities.

Speaking of activities March is HOMWBREW NIGHT so dig out those projects—give them a final polish and bring them out to share with your fellow PACKRATS.

I hope to see you all at the March meeting and the 50th Celebration.



Listen for the WEAK ONES

73

W3GAD Doc



PREZ SEZ

It's less than 2 weeks until the deadline for your reservations for the club's 50th Anniversary Dinner-Dance Gala. Please make sure to have your checks and dinner selections sent in as soon as possible. In case you have misplaced the invitation and response sheet, you can download each of them from the Packrat website. Lots of preparation has gone into collecting memorabilia and making special souvenirs and displays for this event. I look forward to seeing you and your guests there.

I guess I'm glad that I didn't win the Crying Towel—my harmonic, Leon, N1XKT won with his sad tale about the freeze of his computer, and potential loss of his entire VHF SS rover log just 2 hrs before the contest ended. Moping in the rover van, desperately trying to re-boot the machine, it failed. The replacement motherboard was installed a week later by a Dell authorized technician, as the laptop was under warranty. Luckily the hard-drive was alive and all data was eventually retrievable. A week later he had a similar failure and a second motherboard was needed—this time they found the culprit, a minute screw that was loose inside that caused a short. Our runner-up, Ernie, W3KKN gave us a few laughs with his story about his cleaning woman who just had to clean all the cables by disconnecting them from his gear, and making sure that the underside of the knobs were clean by turning them all in both directions, changing every setting that had been previously made to keep the rigs in tune. We heard several additional tear-jerkers, including our January chairperson's relay-arc that took his bottom four bands off the air and causing an 8 hour break in the action to repair. Fortunately, there were also a lot of success stories to tell, and it looks as if we are in the 2.7 million point aggregate club score, with 55 or so logs submitted. Great job to all who made it happen, and thanks again to Steve, N3FTI for chairing the event.

Our Board has been discussing the need for a membership chairperson and committee to provide the outreach for new members and to facilitate their activity with the club and on the air. In addition, our nominating committee will soon be calling upon the membership to fill vacancies for the club leadership and Board of Directors for elections in June. These are great opportunities to learn more about the club and to actively participate in its future.

It is likely that we will have a future program regarding emergency preparedness and the role of amateur radio, especially in the aftermath of the disasters we have seen this past year. This can be an added dimension of capability for our membership, several of whom are already actively involved in that phase of amateur radio service. We may even be able to enhance our nets with some ideas on this theme.

Homebrew night is coming up this month, and there are sure to be some special items in competition for the prizes—make sure you bring your latest and greatest. This past weekend, several of us helped W3FQD clean the radio gear and parts out of his basement as he has moved and sold his house. What super examples of homebrew craftsmanship over the past 50 years! Perhaps a piece or two will show up for display.

The contest wrap-up and June kick-off was a wake-up call for all the improvements that are yet to be done for the mountain, and a special request for additional people to help in the effort. If possible, please reserve the June 9-10-11-12 weekend for supporting the club effort, and commit to help load, set-up, OPERATE, provide gear, take down, and whatever else needs doing. Bring a friend along too! As always, self-appointed tasks completed are the most fulfilling. 73, Rick, K1DS

RE-ANNOUNCING 2006 ETDXA Spring Sprints

Tuesday - April 4- 144mhz - 1900-2300 local
Wednesday-April 12 - 222mhz - 1900-2300 local
Thursday - April 20 432 mhz - 1900-2300 local
April 22-23 - NEWS VHF Conference
April 28-29 - SVHFS conference
April 29-30 SBMS 2 GHz and up contest (see below)
May 7—WARC Hamfest
Saturday - May 6 - Microwaves Sprint - 0600-1300 local
Sat/Sun - May 13-14- 50 MHz - 2300z to 0300z
Dayton Hamvention May 19, 20, 21, 2006
** note dates of non-sprint activities were shown for convenience**

Results for 2005 will soon be available, they are being double checked for accuracy.

Jeff J Baker " [<springsprints@etdxa.org>](mailto:springsprints@etdxa.org)
or [<jjbaker210@earthlink.net>](mailto:jjbaker210@earthlink.net)

announcing

SAN BERNARDINO MICROWAVE SOCIETY 2006 2GHz and up CLUB CONTEST *THIS IS A WORLD WIDE CONTEST*

In the spirit of stimulating more activity in the microwave bands, the San Bernardino Microwave Society (SBMS) members came up with the 2GHz and Up Contest.

The contest period is April 29 to April 30, and runs for 24 hours.

This contest should encourage activity and level some of the microwave contest playing field. The contest would involve activity from 2GHz and up, and center around club activity. Members tally up their scores and add them to other members' scores to make up a Club Score.

This years complete rules are at the following link both in PDF and .txt formats http://www.ham-radio.com/sbms/club_test/2ghz_up_test.html

Please pass this on to any other reflectors and club pages that you know. We would like to see more activity and more clubs entering this contest.

We are looking for ways to improve participation any suggestions comments please contact

N6rmj@sbcglobal.net

THANKS

N6RMJ PAT

GOING THE DISTANCE ON 134 GHZ

Hi everybody,

I would like to claim what should be a new world DX record of 114.4km for the 134GHz band. The QSO was between W4WWQ/4 and WA1ZMS/4 using FSK-CW copied by ear.

QSO Details are:

Date: Feb 26th, 2006

Time: 23:15z

WA1ZMS/4 36-43-03N 80-19-23W EM96ur
W4WWQ/4 37-31-00N 79-30-35W FM07fm

Distance: 114.4km

WA1ZMS/4 WX: Temp: -3.5C Dew Point: -22C

RH: 21% Baro: 917mb

Atmos Loss: 0.118dB/km

W4WWQ/4 WX: Temp: -7C Dew Point: -24C

RH: 25% Baro: 885mb

Atmos Loss: 0.110dB/km

What was likely to be the last cold weather front of this winter season passed through the mid-Atlantic region of the US and so we thought we would take advantage of it and try for better DX than our former record of 79km.

A rather frustrating fact was that the WX front was so void of water vapor and the resulting atmospheric losses so low, that we had several dB of signal margin on both ends of the QSO but didn't have any more distant sites to take easy advantage of at the time.

It has been a rather warm winter here in the eastern US, and if "global warming" doesn't limit our future plans, we hope to be back next fall with even more 134GHz DX!

73,

Brian, WA1ZMS/4

POINT OF INTEREST ON THE WEB

Volker DF5AI always has an interesting website. His latest additions on Hadley Cells and Transoceanic Ducting and Electric Hurricanes were even more interesting than his previous [very interesting] stuff.

Most of you are probably already aware of his site and have already beaten me to it. But in case not, here is the URL for this real GEM:

<http://www.df5ai.net/>

73,

Roger W3SZ

LF EXPERIMENTATION BY RADIO AMATEURS CONTINUES QUIETLY

Experimentation by radio amateurs in the nether regions of the radio spectrum continues quietly and largely unnoticed outside of the LF community. Since the FCC turned down the ARRL's 1998 petition to create an Amateur Radio "sliver band" in the vicinity of 136 kHz, some US amateur licensees have obtained FCC Part 5 Experimental licenses to research the possibilities of LF, including transatlantic and transpacific propagation. A few hams in Canada have obtained special permission from Industry Canada to operate on LF using Amateur Radio call signs. The latest noteworthy accomplishment was a 137 kHz QSO <<http://www.w1tag.com/XDWQSO.htm>> October 29 between US Experimental licensees Laurence Howell, KL1X--operating as WD2XDW--and John Andrews, W1TAG--operating as WD2XES.

"This is the second two-way between US Experimental licensees in that frequency range, the first being a 25-mile CW contact between K2ORS/WD2XGJ and myself last year," said Andrews. The QSO between Andrews, in Massachusetts, and Howell, in Oklahoma, spanned some 1340 miles.

In 2001, Larry Kayser, VA3LK (SK), and Laurie Mayhead, G3AQC, received a special Transatlantic Challenge plaque for completing the first two-way Amateur Radio LF contact between the UK and Canada earlier that year. Another plaque went to Dave Bowman, G0MRF, John Currie, VE1ZJ, and Jack Leahy, VE1ZZ, for completing a crossband (HF/LF) transatlantic QSO in 2000.

A year ago, New Zealand LFER Mike McAlevey, ZL4OL, copied Howell's WD2XDW 137 kHz carrier "bursts" over a path of more than 13,000 km (8000 miles), while Jim Moritz, M0BMU, copied LF signals from WD2XDW, Andrews' WD2XES and Joe Craig, VO1NA, in Newfoundland. Craig and Alan Melia, G3NYK, described their LF exploits and experiences in "The Transatlantic on 2200 Meters," in July 2005 QST <<http://www.arrl.org/qst/2005/07/craig.pdf>>.

More recently, the first confirmed transpacific reception of Canadian Amateur Radio LF signals occurred October 4 when the very slow speed (QRSS) CW signals of VA7LF were heard by ZM2E in New Zealand. "Signals from the ZM2E club station were heard in Canada as well, but propagation was not of sufficient duration to enable a QSO to be completed," said Steve McDonald, VE7SL, one of the VA7LF operators. ZM2E and UA0LE hold the current Amateur Radio two-way LF world record at a distance of 10,311 km (6393 mi). The distance between VA7LF and ZM2E is approximately 11,700 km (7254 mi).

LFers typically use very low data rates and process the incoming sound-card audio in real time using DSP software like WOLF or ARGO.

During the October 29 contact, which took more than two hours to complete, Andrews was running 200 W output into a large, tree-supported vertical loop. Howell was running 1 kW into a tree-supported vertical loop.

Experimentation under FCC Part 15 rules in the vicinity of 160 to 190 kHz has been going on for years by radio amateurs and non-amateurs alike. Amateur Radio licensees in Europe and elsewhere have an allocation at 135.7 to 137.8 kHz, and most Amateur Radio experimentation takes place in this band.

From ARRL News letter Volume 24 No 44 N0AX editor

Things to Ponder

Ever wonder about those people who spend \$2.00 apiece on those little bottles of Evian water? Try spelling Evian backwards: *NAIVE*



2006 CRYING TOWEL

Our panel of judges is ready to get down to the serious job of selecting a winning yarn.

AND THE WHINERS ARE



W3KKN— Second Place

Ernie had big problems when the cleaning lady decided to clean the shack by disconnecting the cables and removing the knob from the rigs for detailed cleaning



K3EGE—Bill shared the station with his dad W3EFH. Other than some amplifier problem on 1296 they had a successful contest with excellent results from all the new antenna work after last years chasing the rigs across the table as the antennas fell off the tower



K1DS—Rick proudly claims a personal best performance for 2006. The results of many improvements in the rover and some good planning—His old reliable laptop waited to die until after he had finished submitting the log—the hard-drive crashed.

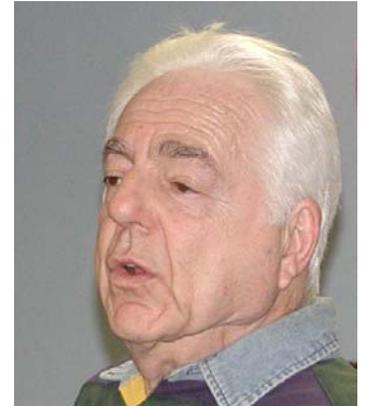
N1XKT

FIRST PLACE

Leon learned first hand about how to “keep moving forward by backing up” when his new laptop crashed during the last 2 hours of the contest. After much aggravation the hard drive and the log were saved.



K3IUUV—Bert, always a reliable contender, had disassembled his shack and was planning to be at a new QTH that has antenna restrictions. Realizing in late December that the move would not happen until after the contest he scurried around for antennas and had a blast.



KB3HCL—Dave is a bit frustrated. He has plenty of power, a new tower and is good through 2304 but has a hard time getting his signals over the hills that surround him for 180 degrees from the northeast to the southwest. There are not to many “Q’s” in the water grids.

WA3EHD—Jim’s antennas also stayed up this year and he had few problems with his interface between IF and Transverters but being visually challenged he lost some time sorting out minor problems—all in all a good contest.



WA3GFZ—Paul got all his rover gear re-installed in the shacks and was merrily working the contest until he needed a 24GHz contact with K1DS—He could not find the entire 24GHz Rig—Lost in his garage somewhere only to be found on the next trip to the garage.



MORE CRYING TOWEL



Leon Rosen, N1XKT receives the first prize CRYING TOWEL from Chairman N3FTI



W3KKN—Hey Ernie that's a 2nd place crying towel not a hankie! But, after that tear jerker of a yarn he needs a towel to soak up all the tears of laughter.

N2UO Marc made his first low power contest entry on 2 bands but when the rover decided to make a laser contact he said why not and cobbled together systems through 10 GHz using an assortment of test equipment and gave his score a big boost.



WA3QVU—Mark Hinkle a visitor related the brief appearance of the Warminster Club K3DN Station in the contest. They get into the Senior Center PA on 6 meters therefore the effort had to shut down just 2 hours into the contest—but they had fun.



Steve Kerns, N3FTI did discover the hazards of hot switching antenna relays when he toasted one of his bottom side antenna selectors and lost over 8 hours doing the repairs and getting some rest before the 2nd phase of his roving adventures

For a January Contest the PACKRATS did very well with all stations reporting "Flat Conditions". Despite the lack of band opening almost everyone produced better scores than in years past and most also report that better preparation led to fewer problems with equipment which meant more time to be productive in making QSO, running the bands and having fun.



W3GAD—Doc spent a lot of time getting the top three transverts back on the air. Despite wandering LO's on 2 bands he work everyone he could hear on the upper band and without any band openings had a personal best score for the January contest.

137 GHz VUCC

Several of you must have seen this coming...

I'd like to claim what should be a new and latest world DX record of 79.6km for the 134GHz band as well as the very first ARRL VUCC claim.

This latest DX record QSO was between W2SZ/4 and WA1ZMS/4.

Band: 134GHz Date: Dec 14th, 2005

Time: 02:56z

WA1ZMS/4 (roving alone) 36-59-28N 80-07-17W
EM96wx

W2SZ/4 (W4WWQ operator) 37-31-00N 79-30-35W
FM07fm

Distance: 79.6km

W2SZ/4 WX: Temp: -10C Dew Point: -14C RH:
72% Baro: 876mb Atmos Loss: 0.250dB/km

WA1ZMS/4 WX: Temp: -5.5C Dew Point: -12C RH:
60% Baro: 928mb Atmos Loss: 0.292dB/km

The gear is the same equipment that was used for last week's former 134GHz DX record. But this time the noisy Gunn source was cleaned up and the resulting improvement in phase-noise allowed us to copy the FSK-CW signals down into the noise floor by ear.

During last night's DX efforts, W2SZ/4 picked up the last three needed grids for the first ARRL VUCC claim on the 134GHz band. (Yes!... Kent, WA5VJB... the QSL cards will be mailed to you on Thursday!)

I'd like to really thank Pete, W4WWQ for pushing me to "go for it" last night in an attempt to get the VUCC efforts completed during the cold night air. It was a LONG and late night. We started after work at 6pm. We arrived home at 3:30am local time and got very little sleep as a result. In a few days I hope to have details, photos, and an audio file of the 79km QSO posted on the web. I will post the URL after the info is uploaded. I'm off to bed now! :-)

73, Brian, WA1ZMS/4

Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club, Inc.
 'The Pack Rats'

January 2006 VHF Sweepstakes Contest

Total Logs: 57

Total Club score: 2,724,560

Call	Contacts and Grids per band																Total									
	50 MHz	144 MHz	222 MHz	432 MHz	903 MHz	1.3 GHz	2.3 GHz	3.4 GHz	5.7 GHz+	Contacts	Grids	Score														
K3TUF	204	31	191	34	105	28	126	28	30	10	39	12	23	9	15	7	21	7	754	166	266,430					
WA3NUF	146	22	210	25	90	20	103	21	39	10	40	7	17	5	13	5	25	7	683	122	182,756					
W3SZ	118	19	150	23	68	17	88	19	36	7	48	11	31	6	10	3	32	11	581	116	174,000					
K1JT	194	37	219	40	77	24	102	25	32	11	30	8	9	3	2	1	4	2	669	151	171,989					
K1DS/R	73	7	158	17	87	9	97	9	40	5	49	7	31	5	20	5	47	15	602	79	137,381					
WA3GFZ	88	13	133	20	79	16	76	15	35	7	48	8	22	6	7	2	14	5	502	92	111,044					
WA3DRC	74	9	128	17	60	11	92	14	37	7	43	6	30	6	12	5	20	6	496	81	107,082					
K2TXB			295	36			173	30			59	15					14	6	541	87	86,043					
N1XKT/R	52	5	145	15	73	9	73	8	33	3	36	5	23	3	13	3	35	12	483	63	83,979					
W2SJ	73	11	84	12	67	10	62	10	29	6	36	7	22	5	13	5	11	4	397	70	73,010					
W3GAD	124	16	149	17	70	14	92	17	30	6	30	5	9	2			1	1	505	78	71,526					
N3FTI/R	207	20	126	15	49	6	60	11	7	2	27	7	15	4	5	2	14	7	510	74	70,966					
W0RSJ	155	26	106	17	58	14	58	13	28	9	26	8							431	87	61,683					
K3IPM	198	24	146	16	64	9	64	9	14	3	15	2	5	2	2	2			508	67	51,724					
K3EGE	102	17	105	20	61	15	70	16	23	4	21	4					3	1	385	77	51,513					
WA2OMY	89	13	199	23	65	16	68	16	13	4									434	72	43,632					
W3EFH	91	15	91	18	55	13	61	13	21	4	21	4					3	1	343	68	41,208					
N3ITT	79	14	123	17	50	12	47	10	19	3	25	3	10	2			1	1	354	62	40,920					
WA3EHD	81	10	84	11	58	9	61	9	23	5	22	3	14	4	4	2	2	1	349	54	40,122					
W3KM	50	9	127	20	59	16	43	14			10	3	7	3					296	65	31,005					
WA3RLT	66	10	80	14	41	10	49	10			18	6	5	3			1	1	260	54	24,084					
N2UO	8	2	149	21	2	1	55	10	2	1	26	5	2	1	2	1	6	3	252	45	20,835					
WA3YUE	53	9	75	10	32	8	35	8	15	3	15	2	5	1					230	41	17,302					
WA3QPX	49	13	47	16	27	9	26	11	5	3	2	2	2						156	54	12,420					
KB3BBR	45	7	55	10	25	6	29	7			14	3	5	3			1	1	174	37	11,544					
K3IUU	95	10	85	9	47	3	50	8											277	30	11,220					
W3ICC	84	8	72	8	46	3	46	7											248	26	8,840					
KB3HCL	51	4	55	6	36	3	30	3	2	2	5	2	2	2					181	22	6,204					
W3FEY	38	9	35	7	17	4	17	4			14	4							121	28	5,516					
W3KJ			72	15	47	13	8	2											127	30	5,460					
AA3GN	14	3	20	4	15	2	15	2	6	2	6	2	6	2	3	2	2	1	87	20	4,600					
K3MFI	21	5	29	5	22	4	20	3	7	2	12	2							111	21	4,410					
N2DEQ	43	7	67	10	10	2	22	6											142	25	4,350					
K3VEQ	54	7	62	8	7	2	25	3	6	1							1	3	154	21	4,284					
KB3XG/R	15	4	14	6	12	3	14	3	8	3			4	2	1	1			69	25	4,025					
N3PLM	36	7	38	10	8	5	5	2	3	1	3	1							93	26	3,224					
K3JJZ	58	6	68	8	16	2	7	2											149	18	3,096					
W3OR	6	4	7	3	9	4	20	9	6	2	2	2	1	1					51	25	2,775					
W3RZU	32	4	64	10			27	4											123	18	2,700					

RECOMMEDATION FOR An Honorary FROZEN CRYING TOWEL

When you consider what others have gone through this past January, the PACKRATS had a very successful and safe contest with no mid-night tower climbing, rotator failures or major equipment failures.

Now consider the fate of some of those less fortunate who do not live in a hotbed of activity like we enjoy here in the Mid-Atlantic and New England areas.

The following is just one story gleaned from the alternate communication sources (the internet).

ARRL January VHF Sweepstakes
Call: W9SZ Operator(s): W9SZ Station: W9SZ
Class: Single Op Port QRP QTH: EN50rl
Operating Time (hrs): 8
Summary:

Band	QSOs	Mults
6:	0	0
2:	21	11
222:	8	7
432:	12	8
903:	5	5
1.2:	5	5
2.3:	2	2
3.4:	0	0
5.7:	1	1
10G:	0	0
4G:	0	0

Total: 54 39 Total Score = 4,875

Club: Society of Midwest Contesters

Comments:

This was an unique contesting experience for me. I left home at 5:30 AM on Sunday, got to my hilltop at 6:30 AM and was set up by 7:30 AM. Temperature was a little below freezing and everything was covered with frost. The view breathtaking and spectacular. It probably got up to 35 later in the day.

I had all bands from 144 through 10368 MHz with me but found out when trying to QSO with K2DRH and K3SIW on 3456 that my transverter for that band was dead (I suspect the LO quit but haven't had time to troubleshoot yet). I did manage a QSO with K3SIW on 5760. Also, K2DRH and K3SIW gave me

All the rest of my equipment was in fine condition and I worked a few people through 1296.

I had to leave for a while in the afternoon on Sunday but came back to the site and was operating in the evening through to the end of the contest. Things got interesting after sunset when a very heavy fog rolled in. The temperature dropped below freezing and everything outside my car except for the Coleman lantern I was using for light became coated with hoarfrost. I was using the "Armstrong" rotor method and the antenna mast became quite slippery. I was also paid a visit by a skunk some time in the evening. We didn't have a direct confrontation but he left his odor in the vicinity.

Activity in this contest seemed way up this year compared to previous years, at least in this area. I never had a time when the bands went dead. One thing about QRP portable operation is that you can't expect to work everyone you hear. I spent a lot of time calling people who never heard me. For some reason I just couldn't work too many grids to the south or south-east. I heard several stations as far south as EM65 but they didn't hear me. My site is supposed to be the highest hill in this part of Illinois, but there could be some obstruction to my southern path. Northern, western and eastern paths seemed quite good. I'll have to analyze the paths from this site with Radio Mobile later.

By the end of the contest, I was getting pretty cold despite running the car for heat. I had trouble sending CW because my fingers didn't work. I was using paper logs and my pen didn't like to write on damp paper. (Everything, both inside and outside the car, was either damp or frozen by the end of the contest.) When it came time to tear down antennas, I had to take frequent breaks to warm up. At one point while taking down antennas my fingers went from feeling cold to feeling warm. That scared me. I really didn't want frostbite. The next day my fingers seemed fine, so I guess I avoided it.

I drove home (a 45 mile trip) in extremely dense fog. I had to slow down to about 30 mph, so the trip took twice as long as expected. But I made it home safely, had some hot chocolate and went to sleep.

Maybe I can get a consolation prize for sticking it out to the end? I have to wonder if I'm crazy for trying QRP Portable operation in a January contest. I guess I'm not quite ready to go on a Peter I DXpedition!

Thanks to everyone who did work me and I'm looking forward to the June contest when things will be warmer.
73, Zack W9SZ

Joel Knoblock W3RFC

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

4 MARCH 2006—W3IY MICROWAVE ACTIVITIES DAY—The January 2006 Contest is behind us now and we still need to keep the ether stirred up with those fine microwave signal. Get all that gear fixed that broke during the contest and test it out early for the Spring Sprints and June contests.

9 MARCH 2006—PACKRATS BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING at the QTH of W3KKN, Ernie Kenas, 2823 Old Welsh Road, Willow Grove, PA

16 MARCH 2006—Regular meeting of the Mount Airy VHF Radio Club. This is the annual HOME BREW NIGHT—Bring your best project or your most miserable failure or just come to enjoy the craftsmanship and beauty of home brewing on the upper bands.

1 APRIL 2006—Celebration of the PACKRATS 50th Anniversary. Williamson Restaurant and Conference Center, Horsham, PA just north of exit 343 of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. For reservations contact Rick Rosen, K1DS at 610-270-8884

1 APRIL 2006- W3IY MICROWAVE ACTIVITIES DAY—Hey it's in the morning and that still leaves plenty of time to get pretty for the party Saturday night so get on there and make some noise.

4, 12, 20 APRIL 2006 - Spring Sprints—Single band each night 144, 222, and 432 Sponsored by ET-DXA—1900 to 2300 each night.

13 APRIL 2006—PACKRATS BOARD of DIRECTORS MEETING

20 APRIL 2006—Regular meeting of the Mount Airy VHF Radio Club.

21-23 APRIL 2006 – Annual VHF CONFERENCE - Sponsored by the N.E.W.S. Group, Enfield CT

28-29 APRIL 2006 – Annual VHF Conference - Sponsored by SVHF, Greenville, SC

29-30 APRIL 2006—SBMS 2GHz and up Club Competition—see announcement on page 3

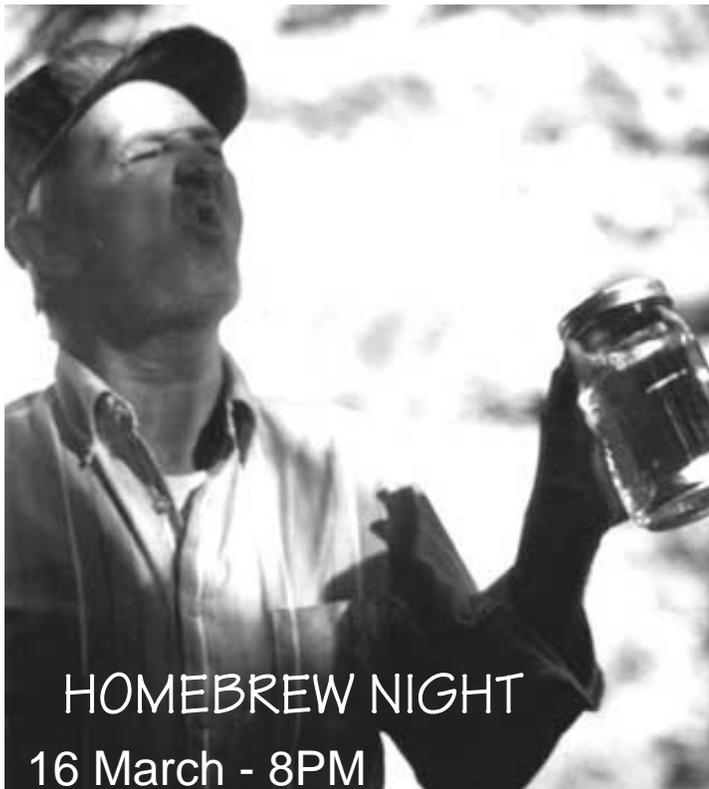
6 MAY 2006 - Spring Sprints 903 and up 0600 til 1300 (local time). ALSO Microwave Activity Day get on the air, listen for the weak ones, and work them too.

7 MAY 2006 - Warminster Amateur Radio Club Annual Hamfest, At the GRANGE in Penns Park, PA

13–14 MAY 2006 - Spring Sprint 50 Mhz 2300 to 0300 UTC

9–13 JUNE 2006 - June VHF QSO PARTY and W3CCX Annual Trek to Camel Back

All meetings are announced on the regular Monday Evening Nets. (See Page 2) - Board meetings of the Mount Airy VHF Radio Club are open to all members. Teleconferencing for members is usually available. Regularly scheduled meetings of the PACKATS are held at 8 PM in the basement meeting room at the Southampton Public Library on Street Road in Southampton, PA. Meetings are open, not only to the membership, but to any party interested in VHF/UHF/Microwave contesting, equipment design and construction for use on the VHF/UHF and Microwave Frequencies or amateur radio in general.



Bring your best effort for a wonderfully inspiring night of SHOW and TELL . No radio project will be turned away and who knows you may even get the coveted Doc Cutler Award.

LOOKING TO SELL

I plan on coming up for the 50th on April 1st. That will be my first time to join the rats in many years. I thought it might be a good time to get an ad in since if someone was interested in one of the items I could bring it along that weekend.

Kenwood TS 690-HF to 6M 100W (in box) \$350
Icom W32 HT - 144/440 (in box) \$175
Kenwood 215 HT 144 with alkaline bat. pack \$50
Icom ICQ7 - Mini HT 144/440 (in box) \$65
Azden 7200 - 220 Mc, 25 W T/R \$150
Yeastu 1500- 25 W 2M T/R (in box) \$90
AEA Code Reader - MBA-RO \$30
RF concepts 2-23 - 2M 20W Amp w Pre-amp \$35
RF Concepts 3-22 -220 Mc 20W amp w Pre-amp \$35
Bearcat 210 XL Scanner \$25
Uniden 2021 Digital Rec.-BC to 30 Mc + FM \$30
Radio Shack HTX 252 - 25 W 2M T/R \$70

All items in like new condition

Can ship small units. Expect to be at 50th on April 1 and could bring along.

Lyn W3NSI 410-394-3159

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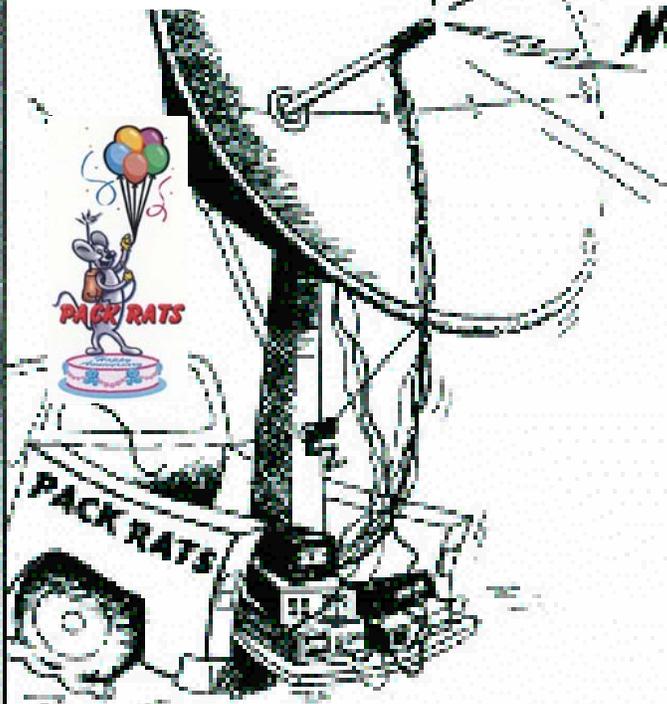
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MEETING NOTICE

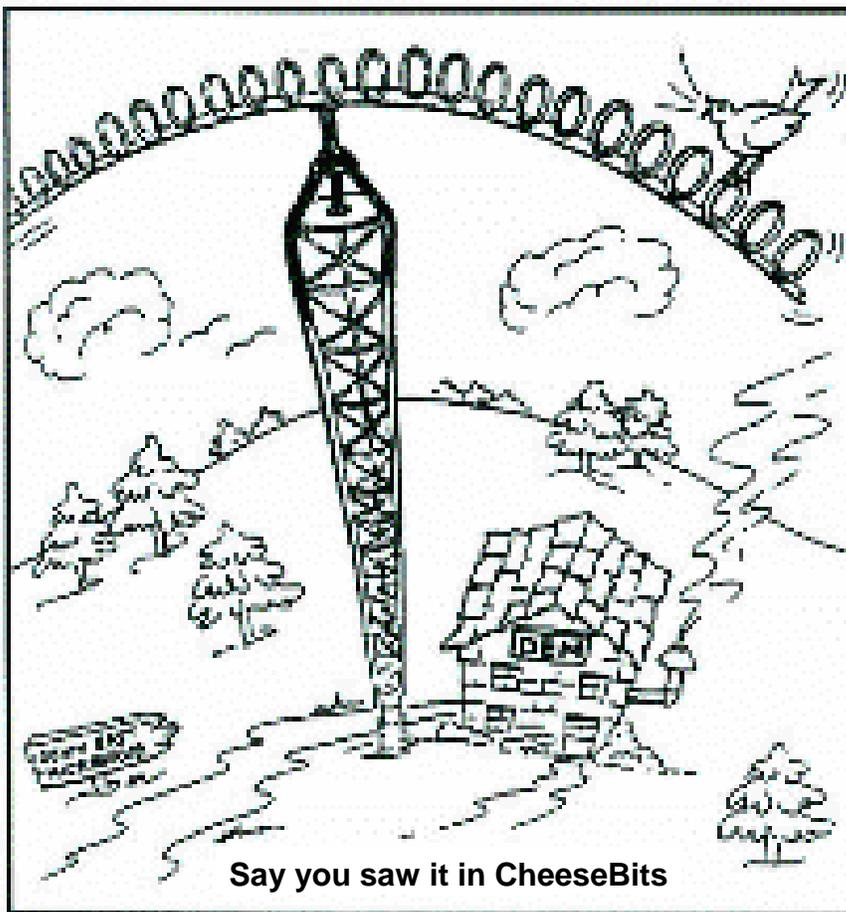


LOOKING AHEAD:
4 MARCH M.A.D.
16 March HOME BREW NIGHT
1 APRIL 50th Anniversary Gala

INSIDE:
CRYING TOWEL
JANUARY CONTEST RESULTS

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