



CHEESE BITS

W3CCX
CLUB MEMORIAL CALL

ARRL
Affiliated
Club



Volume LIII

June 2012

Number 6

PREZ SEZ:

Don't look now but we are half way through the year.

This is also the end of the PACKRAT year.

That means we will have elections for all officers except 2 of the 2-year directors. Your vote at the June meeting gives you the privilege to complain about what the elected officers are doing and how the club business is conducted. Remember too, there are always opportunities to nominate your favorite candidate from the floor or to volunteer yourself before the election takes place.

The most recent big event, of course, was the JUNE VHF QSO PARTY. More than **30 PACKRATS** supported the **W3CCX CAMELBACK EXPEDITIONARY FORCE** in their efforts to give a big presence on the air from Big Pocono State Park.

Under the very capable leadership of N3ITT and K3TUF the effort was both very safe and quite successful. We are always appreciative of Al, N3ITT's skill at arranging the transportation of the equipment and the manpower to get the stations on the air.

Operations under the leadership of Phil, K3TUF started with monthly planning sessions that helped reduce the number of set up and operational problems. El, K3JJZ did a terrific

job in networking the entire operation using WRITE LOG. Our mobile resources were in the capable hands of Nick, N3YMS, enabling us to get power in place quickly and he also supervised the placement, assembly, raising and ultimately lowering the towers without incident.

Rick, K1DS not only was our premier rover but also put considerable effort into assembling the operations manual to guide future field operations.

Many other hands were there to work out the kinks in the station setups. Other than the gremlins that drop by all stations from time to time, all were on the air for the entire contest. More will be said about the efforts at the June Meeting.

May saw several PACKRATS journey to Dayton. They are planning to bring us up to date on the latest widgets for your station.

July 19th will once again bring us the **WHITE ELEPHANT SALE** at WA2OMY's and **August 11th is FAMILY PICNIC** time at N3ITT's. **Please mark these dates on your calendar.** We like to have everyone's participation to make these events a success. Remember the more you put into the club activities the more you get from being a member.

With all the crazy weather lately I suffered damage from a power surge. It is

Pack Rats **CHEESE BITS** is a monthly publication of the **Mt. AIRY VHF RADIO CLUB, INC.** -Southampton, PA.

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PACKRAT BEACONS - W3CCX/B

FM29jw Philadelphia, PA
50.080 144.284 222.064 432.286 903.072 1296.245 MHz
2304.043 3456.207 5763.196 10,368.062 MHz (as of 1/08)

MONDAY NIGHT NETS

<u>TIME</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>NET CONTROL</u>
7:30 PM	50.145 MHz	K3EOD FM29II WA3QPX FM29di
8:00 PM	144.150 MHz	N3ITT FN20ki
8:30 PM	222.125 MHz	KB1JEY FN20je
8:30 PM	224.58R MHz	W3GXB FN20jm
9:00 PM	432.110 MHz	WB2RVX FM29mt
9:30 PM	1296.100 MHz	K3TUF FN10we
10:00 PM	903.100 MHz	WA3SRU FN20le

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

taking me a lot of time to sort out everything that got hit. I know that all the power supplies were knocked out and I do not know if the transverter got damaged. I hope to have everything back on the air in the next few weeks.



I have a lot of office systems and some house systems on surge protectors. At least 4 of the devices gave up their lives to successfully protect important computer, water treatment and entertainment equipment. The surge only hit one side of the incoming power and PECO was out trying to repair or replace power meters for several days after the event. My only advice is to not skimp on the surge protectors – buy the best you can find. And use them on your station too. I know all my power supplies will now (a little late) have them.

I keep hearing about the bands being open, Leonids meteor has just passed by and another new meteor is on its way so the WSJT operators will have lots of dust from which to bounce signals. E-skip has been crazy along with tropo, aurora and storm clouds. There's a little something for everyone.

I really hope to be back on the air for the August and September contest and have a couple of improvements for the January contest too.

In closing I want to say that you all have been most supportive of my three years as your President. The slate of new top management, with many again seeking renewal of their contracts, will do an excellent job of carrying forward the PACKRAT WAY and will continue to guide the club into new worlds of technology and success in all areas of Amateur Radio.

I'm not going anywhere. I'll be on the air, at the meetings and continuing to serve on the Board of Directors.

But thank you all and 73's as President
Meanwhile, *LISTEN FOR THE WEAK ONES...*

73, DE DOC W3GAD AR K

Rover Recognition Award 2012

Well, the cat's out of the bag! This announcement was slated for later in the year but QST's got it in the June issue (page 57) - W2BVH / K1DS

The Mount Airy VHF Radio Club established the Rover Recognition Award in 2005 to honor the efforts of rover stations in VHF, UHF and microwave contesting. The Packrat Board of Directors reviews the activity of the rover stations in all of the competitive VHF events throughout the year. Consideration is given to the effort, regularity of operation, bands operated, grids covered, contribution to the VHF community, unique factors, and operating characteristics. Although total scores are factored in, they are not significant criteria for this award.

Congratulations to this year's recipient, John D'Ausilio, W1RT! For many years John has been roving the grids on the east coast and delivering dozens upon dozens, or shall we say hundreds of QSOs to other amateurs on the VHF, UHF and microwave bands. His well-equipped rover, dubbed the "Intergalactic Jitney," has substantial power and antennas for bands from 50MHz through 24GHz. His vehicle has been designed and engineered to maximize operability and communications capability, including the integration of a computer logging network for two operating positions and the use of software defined radio. In 2011 he was active in both the January and June VHF activities and scored well in both. He has covered grids from Virginia to Maine over the years, and has made it a point to be **communicating with all comers**. His usual roving partner, Christophe Huygens, ON4IY, flies to the US to participate in the VHF contesting.

The memory of Bill Seabreeze, W3IY (SK), is honored by the Rover Recognition Award. The Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club, Inc. members were fortunate to have had Bill operate the VHF contests and other on-the-air activities from Bill's rover van in grids adjacent to "Packrat territory" and were responsible for hundreds of QSOs, dozens of grid multipliers and thousands of contest points for the Packrats in each of these events. Christophe was also Bill's roving partner for many years.

The club voted to make Bill Seabreeze, W3IY (SK) an Honorary Packrat and also awarded him a plaque in recognition of his efforts and achievements over the past several years. Not only had he been an active roving contester, but he stimulated significant microwave activity in the region with the consensus building for the designated "Microwave Activity Days," commonly referred to as MAD on the first Saturday morning and the first Monday evening of each month. Many of the rovers in the region try to get their vehicles out for these MAD periods, home stations are active, and all try to make sure that their gear is in working order, and possibly try out new modes, new paths and new bands. Additionally, Bill established an excellent web site as a resources page for rovers, including lots of pictures of his gear, rover vehicle and operating sites. There were also a host of links and other useful info on roving issues and how he had addressed them from his experience. The Rover contest designation was established in the early 90's as a new option for stations that were mobile through several grids that would have otherwise remained 'unactivated' during the contest. Many clubs supported the early rovers as a method of increasing both the activity and scores. According to Dan Henderson, N1ND, Contest Branch Manager, ARRL, (at the time) "...the rules change occurred in the '91-'92 contest season. The biggest reason for the establishment (of the) category was to open up the captive rovers and allow them to work more stations for score."

Submitted by Rick Rosen, K1DS, President emeritus, Packrats.

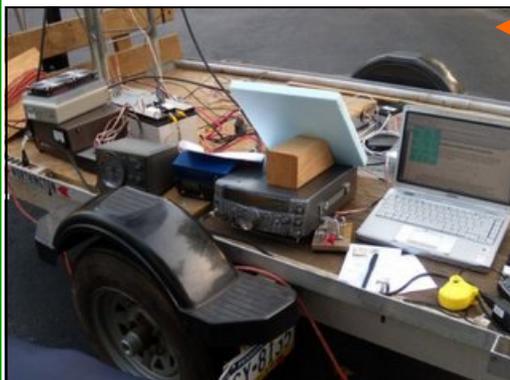
Three Important CW QSOs

It has taken 6 years or so to reach this milestone. This is the **ongoing saga** of the story I wrote, "There's No Such Thing as a Free Dish." It has taken me a lot of planning and trial and error, with the help of many other hams to accomplish this self-appointed task. Today I completed three CW QSOs on 1296 MHz, using my portable 10' dish and my TS2000x with the DEMI 120W amp. I have to thank K2UYH, N2UO, WA3GFZ, N3ITT, K3VEQ, and K1JT for assistance along the way. The trailer usually was in winter storage at K3VEQ's QTH until last year when my daughter's new house had an extra garage bay for the rover and the trailer, and this encouraged me to put forth the effort focused on the Memorial Day weekend when there was the Dubus 1296 EME activity weekend for two days when the moon was easily visible overhead.

I set up the trailer with the dish on Friday. I still had wiring to do for the sequencing of the relays and preamp protection, as well as the keying of the rig and the amplifier. Paul WA3GFZ came over Saturday to walk through the set-up with me and assure that all the wiring was done correctly so that we would not blow out the pricey preamp. We went through the exercise of tracking the sun and setting up the azimuth and elevation controls for the dish based on peaking the sun noise with about a **9 dB result**. Once we rotated the dish on the moon, we immediately heard several stations calling CQ. Most of the afternoon was spent trying to call several larger stations that were active with big dishes and power, but there were no responses as many of them were working through "pile-ups" and it was likely that I hadn't yet mastered the Doppler shifting. The weather threatened at 6PM and I quickly packed up the electronics, covered the trailer with a tarp and the feed with a plastic bag. I winched the trailer back up onto the driveway for the night, using a winch that I fastened to the rear garage wall. I secured the trailer and it survived the winds and downpours from the overnight storm.

After a late night call with N2UO I got more information on how to set my XIT to be able to respond to others on their frequency. We also worked through recalculating the feed position in the prime dish focal center, and this enabled improved signals. I was able to QSO F2TU, N2UO and K2UYH.

Now that I have crossed this milestone, there is always more to do. I need to **recheck the sun noise and optimize the feed position** for future use. I will minimize losses by placing the amp closer to the feed, shortening the cable and use a lower loss feed-line. I could seek a lower loss preamp and more output power. I could operate WSJT. The neighbors were curious and forgiving about having the trailer and dish in the cul-de-sac for the weekend. This odyssey is ongoing and is sure to **bring me more knowledge and cost me lots more time and money**. But it is a self-appointed task, and having accomplished it is very rewarding. **Thanks again** to all those who helped along the way. Rick, K1DS



The station (L to R): DEMI amp and Astron supply; 24VDC batteries for elevation jack; Yaesu 800 series rotor; homebrew elevation control with digital readout; TS2000x and sunshade; Vibroplex electronic key; computer with astronomical data readout.

10' reclaimed satellite dish, OK1DFC septum feed and scalar ring, mounted on my 8' X 4' Worthington trailer.



Pix from Last Weeks Camelback VHF QSO Party

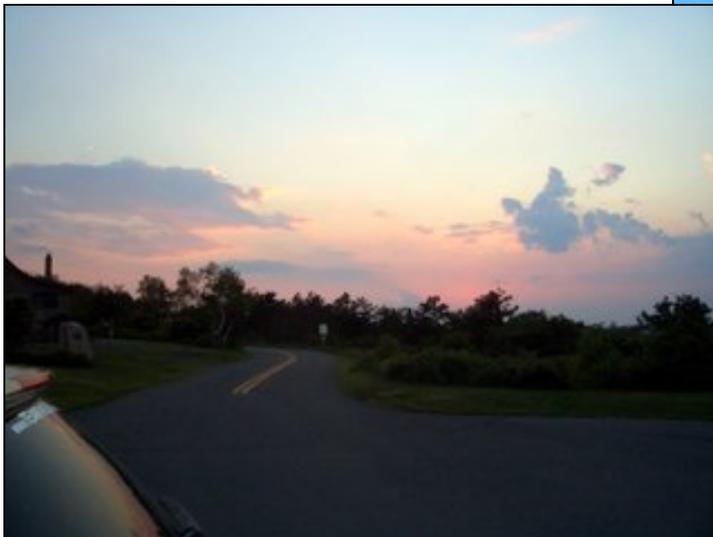
I want to thank everyone who participated in this weekends adventure! Everyone, from the Rovers who traveled all over the land, to the folks who assisted with either load up and unload or both, to the folks who visited the mountain, it was nice to see familiar faces, to the folks who ventured to the mountain to assist and operate, to the fellows who braved the entire four day event, it was a wonderful weekend, we had a great time, and believe it or not, we are already making plans for next year. Lots of improvements in store. Stay tuned more to come.
73, Phil K3TUF



....Camelback cont'd



....Camelback con't'd



The Saga of W2MC and the "No Budget Rover"

Here's how Jon, W2MC put together his "No Budget" rover. It's gleaned from several emails he sent before the contest, detailing some of the work he did to pull the rover together and from a report he wrote post-contest.

May 24, 2012

Hello all,

As several of you know, I am putting a rover together for the June VHF Contest (9/10 June), and I know several of you are very curious about my plans and progress.

Well, I put together a list - what I'm doing, how it's coming along, and where I'm heading, both with rover construction and rove plans. I've attached a copy for everyone's enjoyment....if you have any comments or suggestions, I'd love to hear 'em! Jon W2MC

May 26, 2012

Hello all!

Spent about half the day working on the "No Budget Rover".

Thought you might want pix...see a few of 'em that are attached.

Jon W2MC

May 27, 2012

Another day, working in the hot sun cutting the grass and building a rover...its 3:30, and I (finally) decided to get out of the heat....

Power subsystem is in, another radio is in, the mast is fastened, and two antennas are aboard. What I HAVE found is ignition noise.....looks like I NEED battery power... :(

W2MC Jon

May 28, 2012

Well, it was yet another day. No new photos, mainly because I'm lazy. And its hot. Very hot. Only new stuff is 6 meters.

The 6 meter yagi is now up and running on the mast. Its an M2 3 element; from their "SS" beam series - whatever "SS" stands for. The proximity of the other antennas, and the van, meant an adjustment for both the 6 meter and the 2 meter antennas to get them into resonance; the 2 meter by moving the gamma match shorting bar all the way out to the end of the sleeve, and the M2 6 meter by moving the shorting bar most of the way out and lengthening the driven element by about a half inch on each side. Both yagis now at least present a reasonable load to the transmitters. This exercise also showed something I kinda expected - [there is a BIG SWR difference](#) with the yagis facing forward (over the van roof) than with them pointing away from the van. This may drive the operating method - park the van pointing away from where I want to operate, then loosening the mast and hand-rotating it 180 degrees. While it may sound like a pain (and I suspect it might be) I am not sure how much of a limitation it will be. Most of the

stops I am planning consist of parking and pointing the beams roughly toward Philadelphia. Some slight jiggling might make a difference, but with short yagis, I don't think it will make too much change.

The [maiden voyage](#) of the “No Budget Rover” also occurred today - I drove the van over to Joe KC2TN's - all the way on the other side of town!!! Actually, the goal was to take it out onto the White Horse Pike and get it up to speed. The antennas seemed to behave themselves for that short jaunt, but I think I will add a short tie-off line to the front of one antenna, to ensure they all stay pointed over the van roof while driving.

While I was there, Joe and I talked battery systems and antennas. He loaned me a 220 yagi - a short one with a log-periodic drive - and what looks like an M2 1.2 gig yagi. I may be able to add both of those bands to the Rover before showtime. If I do, that may be it for this mast, space-wise, unless I go to an H or a Y pattern for the mast.

To let Joe know, I cleaned-up the 220 yagi, found/fixed a break in the feed (bad solder joint), and put a new sleeve and mast-to-boom on the end of it. Its now ready to go.

I'm now off to enjoy what Abbie has put together for dinner...life is good...

Jon W2MC

June 15, 2012

Hello again, all!

Well, I sat down, edited the first rover report, and (more importantly) added photos. Its a pretty good read (even if I do say so myself).

I still have the full QSO information in there, and I debated if I wanted to take it out or not....but decided it really didn't matter who saw EXACTLY how I finished - after all, I will be sending it up to the League in a little while, anyway. The score still stands at 8668

Jon W2MC

Here is the report (with a few of Jon's very nicely shot pix. (Note, the QSO results have been edited out, but you can contact Jon directly for the full report —Ed.)

W2MC/R – Post Contest Rove Thoughts and Results – 11 June 2012

First – thanks to all who helped, and offered help for the Rover! While this review might sound somewhat critical, I really had a great time. I made it to 3 grids on Saturday (FM28, FM29, FN20) and 3 on Sunday (FN10, FN11, FN21). The van and I traveled over 600 miles. Per the logging program the CLAIMED-SCORE: 8668

FN20 – Burlington County Farm Fair Complex, Route 206. Columbus NJ. This is a reasonably good location to operate from; not quite as high as Pole Hill Park, but signals were pretty good. It was very buggy at night (when I was there). It was a tough decision between turning off the lights and operating with minimal vision (and avoid attracting bugs) AND having the doors and windows open, or leaving the lights on with the doors and windows closed...but sweating due to a lack of ventilation. (Since I hate to sweat, I worked in semi-darkness.) I stayed here until the bands (and the operator) started to peter-out and I called it a day.

SUNDAY – Before heading out, the XYL informed me that I “should be home for dinner” Sunday night. Since I know what “should” means (when spoken by the XYL) and reflecting on the time constraints involved and my desire to go see the Packrats operation atop Camelback Mtn., I [decided to skip the grid square corner near Lancaster PA](#) (which was my original choice to start from on Sunday) and headed up the PA Turnpike to the Hazleton area, for the FN10/11/20/21 grid square corner.

Drive into Northeast PA. During the drive up, I made one 2 meter FM contact while rolling in FM29, and later I stopped on the side of the road in FN20 to add a few contacts from W3CCX and K3YTL. That short stop helped the score a bit, and also pointed-out that having FM rigs in easy reach while driving would be a good thing.

FN10 – Hazleton PA. The Penn State Hazleton campus is a GREAT location to operate from. I will have to spend more time here on the next Rover outing. While I was there, I also ran into another Rover – Bert, K3IUV/R.

FN11 – Along Route 80. I need to find a good location to operate from...none I tried was worthwhile – either not high enough or too much noise.

FN21 – Camelback Mtn. It was my first visit to the top of Camelback, and I can see why [the Packrats LOVE to operate from here](#). It's a GREAT location; with easy drive-up access and a spectacular, commanding view of the entire Pocono area. And, of course, [everyone wanted to see the Rover](#). I could have (and probably should have) added QSOs from FN21, but had to get home, so I did not work anyone other than W3CCX and W3GAD (and K3IUV/R tailgating). And yes, [I did make it home in time](#) to keep the XYL happy.

OBSERVATIONS

What Worked :

Batteries/Power – For the current set-up; a bank of three car batteries powered the rigs well. With the current configuration, I could probably get away with two; the few times I checked the voltage after a stop it was always above 12 volts. Remembering to change the battery bank connection from the rigs to the van was a bit of a pain, though – something more permanent, and with less thought (like a solenoid or contactor to connect/charge the batteries only when the engine is running) would be even better.

Antennas – 220 MHz was one surprise; even with 25 watts, it was hot on the bands. Also, 1.2 GHz

was hot – when the antennas are pointed correctly, it was clear as a bell for great distances. 432 MHz likewise worked well.

Rigs – The Kenwood TS-790 worked great for 2 and 432 – just push one button and you

change between the two frequencies. The FT-736 likewise worked well for 220 and 1.2. Individual rigs/antennas – particularly for the lower bands – helped operating greatly. QSY's were slowed only by logging, not by anything I had to do to change bands.

Mast/Antenna Mounting – Functionally, operating with a mast off the back of the van was great.

The assembly was rock-solid and trouble-free for the 600+ miles driven. Twelve feet of overall height (ten foot mast supported two feet off the road) seems to be good, as I did not have any significant problems with trees. Only things that would have been better would be a rotator and a brake assembly that didn't require a ladder and 7/16 inch wrench.

What Didn't Work:

Maps and Directional (antenna pointing) - I needed to bring a compass! Using a GPS as a compass just sucks. My cheap GPS got me around, but it doesn't display Maidenhead Grid Square locations.

Unless I looked it up in advance, I had no idea of my grid square location. I need to find a GPS that displays Maidenhead Grids. Trying to identify north from memory can be difficult, especially in unfamiliar locations. A map with notations where the "big guns" are located would make it easier to point and work them on the higher bands.

Antennas – 2 meters did not work as well as I had hoped, and 6 meters was not good at all. I strongly suspect that because of the influence of the van roof, the cascade of antennas on the mast needs to be re-thought. When I put this all together, I wanted to keep 6 meters lower simply because of its size, but higher is probably better for this antenna. Also, I wonder if antenna construction has anything to do with their performance when tightly stacked, because the T-Match antennas (222 and 432) seemed to perform better than the Gamma Match antennas (2 and 6).

Rigs– A better way to hold them down is needed, as the FT-736 slipped its bungee cord on one hard stop. The poor 6 meter performance wasn't just the antenna being too close to the van roof – I think the IC-706 needs to be replaced with something better for 6 meters. It's also been awhile since I really ran some of these rigs...it took me awhile to reacquaint myself with how they operate. What added to the difficulty was going back and forth between three different rigs on the "main" bands. FM rigs – I need to have them available and accessible both while driving and when operating. FM-only rigs on 2 meters and 220 MHz were useful...a 440 rig would have been nice too, but I didn't bring one.

Headphones – I elected not to use headphones and just operate with hand mics and internal speakers for most of the contest. It worked, but the sound quality could have been better. A headset might not be the best (hand mics are probably more convenient when swapping rigs/bands), but a good headset (not the cheapie that I brought with me) would have helped digging out the weak ones.

Computer – This trip proved to me that netbooks are too small for logging. I am going to have to check the log for typos on a machine with a "real" screen and keyboard. The N3FJP logging program worked well; the only glitches were my big fingers and old eyes on a tiny computer.

DC-AC Converter Noise – Minor noise was noted in the DC-AC converter (for computer power) ; particularly in the IC-706 on 6 meters (which is another reason to change-out that rig). Since the computer was a netbook, it was easy to run off the internal battery and charge while driving to the next location. Adding additional 120 V AC components (like antenna rotors) will increase the noise.

Lighting – night operations were a problem due to lighting. BUT it was either turn-on the lights and deal with the attracted bugs, or turn off the lights and deal with the limited vision.

Antenna height – a means to get the antennas higher in the air (particularly for 6 meters – somewhat for 2 meters) would be VERY useful.

Minor vehicle issues - I think the van is developing a vacuum leak – I could hear it...probably just a hose has dry-rotted and needs replacing. I need to fix the speedometer – watching it flicker around is very distracting (And why does the odometer work, but not the speedometer?). Also need to track down the source of the alternator noise.

What I Need to Try Before the Next Contest:

Antennas - Move 6 and 2 meter antennas up higher on the mast to see if that addresses their problems with interaction and the roof proximity. I think I will consider a Moxon for 6 meters instead of a 3-element Yagi. The Moxon has less gain, but takes up a LOT less space (particularly with wingspan) than a Yagi. Add an Antenna Rotor! That way I wouldn't have to jump in and out of the Rover, turning the antenna mast by hand for each QSO. Some sort of push-up pole or crank-up assembly to get the antennas up higher (once parked).

HT – It would have been good to bring along an HT for the really close-in stations. The VX-5R, with its tri-band capability, would have been perfect.

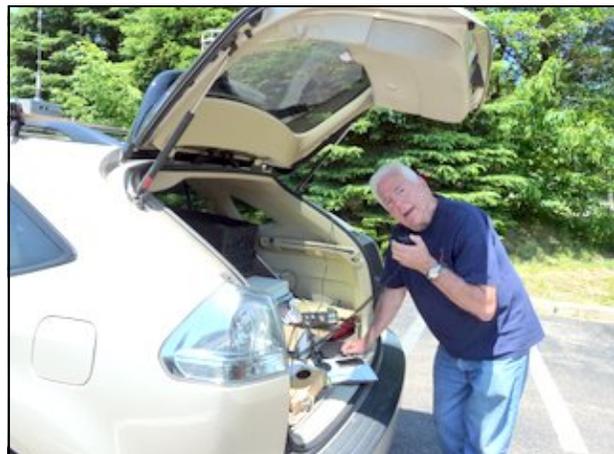
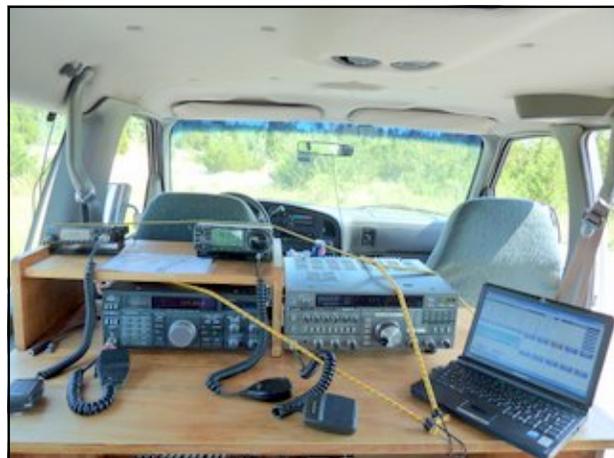
Light Band – It would have been easy to stop at several different QTHs along the way and pick up a few QSOs (and mults :) via laser beam. I will have to construct one before the next rover trip.

Extra bands??? Perhaps 902 MHz? Who knows what will appear come January 2013!

73's to all, thanks for all the contacts, and see you in the next one!

Jon – W2MC/R

w2mc@comcast.net



Gene Zimmerman W3ZZ, SK

From the ARRL: Gene Zimmerman, W3ZZ, of Gaithersburg, Maryland, passed away on Sunday, June 3. He was 71. Zimmerman wrote the popular QST column "The World Above 50 MHz" from 2002-2011. He also served on the ARRL Contest Advisory Committee, edited the VHF contesting column for *CQ Contest* magazine during its five-year lifespan and was director of the CQ VHF Contest from 2000-2002. An ARRL Life Member, Zimmerman earned VUCC on six bands: 50, 144, 222, 432, 903 and 1296 MHz, as well as DXCC, Worked All States and Worked All Continents on 6 meters. He was an early proponent of -- and participant in -- aggressive contest log checking. First licensed in 1956 -- and an Amateur Extra since 1963 -- Zimmerman has logged several national Top-10 finishes in the ARRL November Sweepstakes (both modes), as well as a second-place North American finish in the CQ World Wide CW Contest (from VP2MDD). He also placed in the Top-10 several times in the ARRL VHF QSO Parties and in the ARRL VHF Sweepstakes.

Ward Silver, N0AX related the following: "His tenure as the conductor of QST's 'The World Above 50 MHz' usually resulted in a sharp recounting and analysis of the month's unusual on-the-air events. I learned something from every single column. But what most will remember about Gene, though, will be his amazing capacity for storytelling and the twinkling of his eyes as he told of the undoing of scoundrels with obvious and undiluted glee. I've had the pleasure of being his roommate at Dayton and WRTC and I don't believe I've ever laughed harder or longer. Gene knew where all the bodies were buried and relished his role as sage and historian."

"Amateur Radio has had its share of characters but none were more colorful or more widely respected than Dr Gene Zimmerman, W3ZZ -- a man who in one breath could identify the source of the world's greatest hot dogs, explain once-in-a-lifetime propagation and recount the history of contesting and testers," Silver said. "We will all miss Gene's presence greatly and it is a sad day for us all to learn of his passing." —**For additional details** see <http://www.arrl.org/news/view/former-the-world-above-50-mhz-conductor-gene-zimmerman-w3zz-sk>

Just heard that our friend Gene Zimmerman died last night from complications of surgery. He will be missed dearly. A great person and ham radio operator. Friend of the VHF community.

You know, when we hosted MUD, a few years ago, Gene and I bunked together one night. We laid awake nearly the whole night swapping stories and exposing our views on various ham topics. Well most of the espousing was done by Gene, but he was a very interesting fellow to talk with, and a great VHF'er and all round great guy. He will certainly be missed.

Rest in Peace Gene - Very 73 from Russ, K2TXB

Very sad news indeed. 73, Bill - K3EGE

Yes, we'll all miss his friendship and stories. W1SMS Steven M. Simons

Very sad news. I have worked Gene many times over the years. A great supporter of vhf/uhf activity. George W3FEY

Gene was a great guy and a good friend of the Rats. He will certainly be missed. - Paul W2PED

I have known Gene for over 30 years. A great loss for the VHF community. He was a savvy guy. When he came up here a few years ago to be the dinner speaker at the VHF meeting, we met for lunch at Pudges, the ultimate local cheesesteak place here in Montgomery County. It was a treat for him. We also sat together at MUD when it was held in Dallas about 6-7 years ago---his most favorite expression at the time regarding something I forgot about, but he often repeated and enjoyed was, "That's about as useless as tits on a bull." That still rings in my ears with his gravelly voice. He will be missed. RIP, RR K1DS

K1DS Rover Report

My tears are now dry. I fretted over the 5G transverter and protecting the front end after blowing it out 5x, despite a sequencer, simultaneous keying of the dual feed, and a chat with Steve at DEMI. Now it also has a transfer relay to keep 5G receive grounded through a 50 ohm termination in all situations. The culprit seemed to be overload and proximity of the 400W of 2m, as the 2m beam driven element and height of the dish feed are exactly the same and only 3' away from each other in a certain direction. I reinstalled it in the rover but heard no beacon. What the heck??? I tore it apart again, found a broken wire, but likely that was from tearing it apart (and not an easy task in the rover), fixed the wire, still no beacon. BUT—I was hearing good receive gain noise....I even spoke to WB2RVX, who confirmed the beacon operation (as well as other Packrats) and frequency. Oh well...

So I'm off to FN11 for my first grid, keep thinking about it---**lo and behold, I find my beacon guide and written in pen next to the frequencies I find the offsets---for all the micros—DUH!!** No wonder I couldn't hear the beacon. My **readout is off about 80KHz**. One easy QSO with W3CCX and Paul reassures me 5G is fine.

So we work the bands as the contest starts, even catching the C6 in FL15 on 6m. On to FN10, trying to find the other local rover, but he left before I arrived. Again ran the bands with the club, this time including a nice SSB QSO on 24G. Then as I catch K1TEO I get set to run the bands, there is suddenly no 12V distribution to the microwave set-up. Yikes—what is up with that? No worry, when I get to the mountain, they'll help me fix it. WA2YUE was ready and able, quickly diagnosing a "high resistance connection" and cutting off the RCA connector and directly connecting the 12V into the switch box with some help from the KB1JEY crimper parts box. I catch a nice dinner from Doc, work my LASER QSOs and a few other contacts and then off to FN20 at Alamuchy for another nice run, including 24G.

Now I'm on the way home—making good time and getting to sleep in my own bed, but just as I turn the

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...Rover Report cont'd

corner from 202 to Upper State Rd, just south of Doylestown, I hit a hidden bump, go airborne for a second, and then I hear the horrible sound of metal scraping on the roadway. Immediately pull over (convenient road shoulder) and assess the issue. The main mast fractured and the **antennas are now dragging on the road, still connected to the top of the mast**. Wow—it could be worse. Thankfully, no one behind me, and there is enough stub left on the upper mast to reposition it atop the van again and limp home the last few miles. Up at 7AM to assess the situation. The antennas are pretty much all there, although the fiber mount for the Moxon is broken. Two meter beam has separated nicely at a joint and is easy to reconstruct with some spare elements. The main mast is replaced with another one, a plywood mount for the Moxon is fashioned, and we're off again to make a few more grids, FN30, FM28 and FM29.

Lots of driving, but it seems like the trips were worth it. About 700 miles total and almost \$200 worth of gas. About 25K points. Had some nice QSOs, focusing on the microwaves, and met some nice folks at all my stops. The rover is all disassembled now, and awaits the next outing.

What is your story??

73, Rick, K1DS

The Wayback Machine

Gleaned from the pages of

Cheese Bits, May, 1962

(Vol. V Nr. 3)

(Authors comments in *italics*)

- This issue, 11 double-sided legal size pages (including the Packrat Picnic flyer, \$1.00 per family), mailed for a 4-1/2 cent stamp (*remember them when you affix your current 44 cent stamp to a 1-oz letter!*)
- Cover page reports (in **36** point characters) that the club has won the 15th ARRL January Sweepstakes. Ed Tilton, W1HDQ (VHF Editor, QST) **delivered the gavel personally** at the May meeting. Top score in the country by member Jo, W2EIF. Top score, E. PA, member Ernie, W3KKN. Congratulations and thanks extended to all of the members.
- League Bulletin NR 847 reports that Herbert Hoover Jr., W6ZM, former Under Secretary of State was elected as President of the ARRL. Bulletin 848 containing a detailed message from Hoover was included in its entirety.
- Technical. K3IUUV (this author) presented a schematic and details for a Power Supply and Modulator for the AN / APX-6. This was a surplus unit originally used for IFF service, and was being used by a number of Hams to get on 1296. In keeping with the

Packrat Approach, the design uses a scrounged TV transformer for the power supply, and an audio output transformer for the modulator.

- W3NSI in his new products column reports on the new Swan single HF band SSB Transceivers. Selling for \$275, Lyn suggests using the SSW-120 (20-meters) with mixers and converters to provide a 6-meter SSB station. (*This author used a SW-120 for many years as the SSB source for my 432 station.*)
- K3BPK, Dave takes the opposite tack, bemoaning the attention recently given to higher priced commercial Ham gear. He requests a “back to basics” approach using and adapting more commercial surplus, and gives a few good examples (*not unlike what the club members have done recently with the obsolete TV station equipment.*)
- K3MSV's six-meter report notes that band conditions in the past month have been outstanding, with all states heard and workable.
- Two-meters. Dave, W3LHF reports contacts from Virginia to Maine, including at least two stations operating portable on Mountain tops in Maine (*early June contest tryouts?*).
- Reports of TV stations from Texas, Kansas and Oregon being received in CA, confirmed the extended band conditions in this “Es” season.
- Helen (XYL of W3SAO, and Cheese Bits editor) gave a detailed description

of the successful **Ladies Night**. Held at the Southwark AC, 81 attended. Roast Beef, 1" thick was served. The comedian repeated his "Banana in The Ear" Joke from the previous year, but everyone still enjoyed it (*ask an old timer about the joke, if you are interested*).

- SWAP & SHOPPE column shows K3JJZ "Wanted" a Heath Sixer. (*El, was that to replace one that was stolen from your car?*). K3IUUV (this author) was looking for back issues of QST and CQ (*Got them all*).
- The Board of Directors announced that they have established a "building fund", for member contributions to support the ARRL Headquarters expansion. (*The fund subsequently grew to include "brick sales" used to fabricate a scale model of the new headquarters. This model can still be seen if you visit league Headquarters*).
- The June Contest Chairman, Frankie, W3SAO announced the operating site would be in Doylestown, at the QTH of club member Warren Parker, W3CKP. Operations will be on 6-meters through 1296.

Thirty, de K3IUUV



HH4/W3CMP - HH4/KB3SIJ DXpedition

I'm heading to Northwest Haiti Christian mission in St. Louis du Nord, Haiti, on June 18th with my son Tim, KB3SIJ, and one of my twin daughters. We should arrive in Port au Prince on Sunday June 19th. We will take a bus from Port au Prince to the north coast- a 6 or 7 hour trip. We will be at the mission until June 29th; I will have to tear down no later than the 28th of June. If this trip follows the last 2 trips, I'm sure we'll both be ready to leave asap by then. Calls will be HH4/W3CMP and HH4/KB3SIJ. Grid is FK39pw. I'm not sure what operating conditions at mission will be. We're not supposed to have computers but I may try to smuggle some kind of notebook to see if I can get on internet at the mission once in awhile. I doubt there are any internet cafes in St. Louis du Nord. I'm hoping mast sections I left in 2007 are still there. I know 6 meter antenna I left down there is long gone.

I'm taking the FT-897D. For six meters I will have a Tokyo HyPower 200 watt brick. I am limited in power since there is no access to 220v. Will contact M2 to see what they can do for an antenna. Hoping to have 6M5XHP or 6M7HV for six. I'll also take a 200 watt Tokyo HyPower watt brick and 2 meter antenna for kicks. I'm going to try some CW EME on my moonrise and moonset with a few larger stations, and early morning M/S back to the states. If I get lucky maybe there will be some 2 meter E skip.

We will monitor 6 meters as much as possible. I am still trying to find out what the power situation is. In the past mission generators were usually turned off from about 18:00-20:00UTC every day,. Looking at 50.106 or 50.117MHz as frequencies, and 144.200MHz. I will try to get on HF in evenings, usually after dark, which is about 8:00pm local (00:00utc) as time allows. HF operation is generally on 20 or 60

Events

For inclusion, please direct event notices to the editor.

Eastern Pa. Section Convention (Electronics Expo and Firecracker Hamfest) - Hamfest (etc) June 30, 2012. Harrisburg, PA. See <http://www.w3uu.org> for details.

Valley Forge Hamfest - Hamfest July 8, 2012 Kimberton Fire Co. Fairgrounds. See <http://www.marc-radio.org> for details.

Packrat White Elephant Sale - Auction Sale July 19th, 2012. QTH of Gary WA2OMY. Watch Packrat reflector for details.

CQWW VHF Contest - Contest July 21, 2012 1800Z to July 22, 2012 2100Z. See <http://www.cqww-vhf.com/> for details.

ARRL August UHF Contest - August 4-5, 2012. Details to follow.

Packrat Annual Picnic BBQ, etc. - August 11, 2012. QTH of AI N3ITT. Watch the Packrat reflector for details.

15th International EME Conference Meeting August 17 - 18, 2012, Churchill College, Cambridge UK. See <http://eme2012.com/> for details.

10 GHz and Up (round 1) Contest - August 18-19, 2012. Details to follow

September VHF QSO Party - Contest September 8-10 2012. Details to follow.

10 GHz and Up (round 2) Contest - September 15-16, 2012. Details to follow

Joint Mid-Atlantic & Eastern VHF Conference Conference - October 12-14, 2012. Marriott Courtyard in Bensalem PA. Details to follow.

Microwave Update (MUD) 2012 Conference - October 18- 21, 2012. Hosted by: The 50MHz and Up Group of Northern California. Details to follow.

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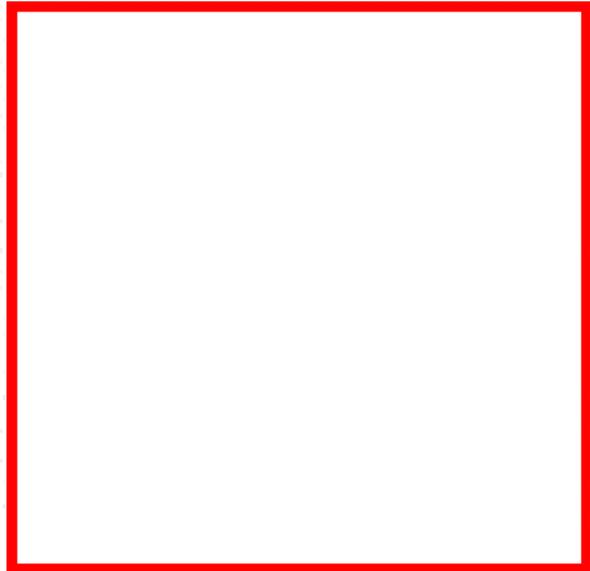
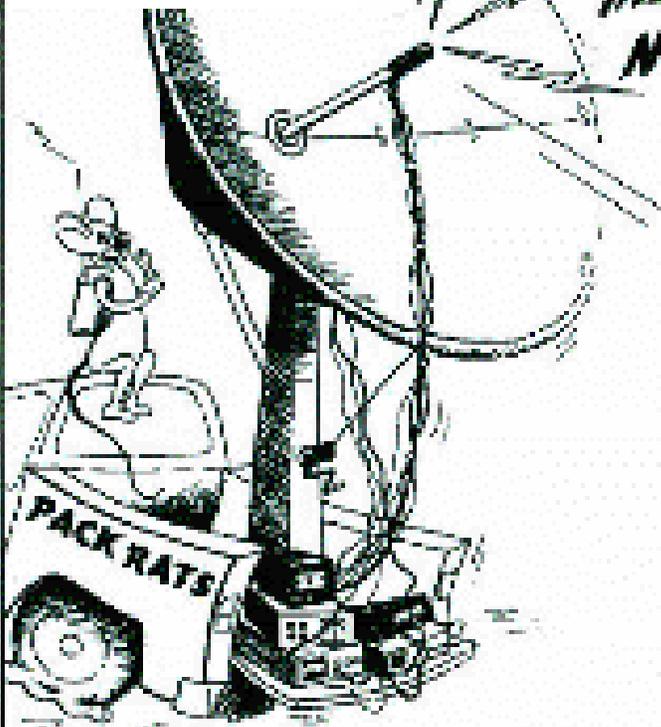
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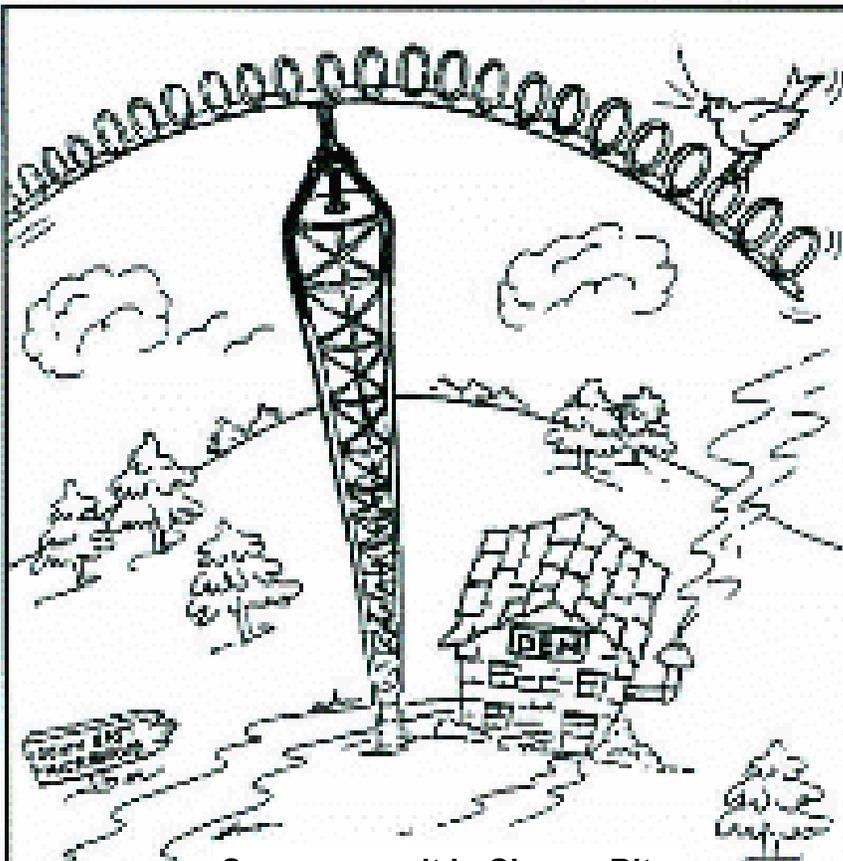
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