Mt. AIRY V.H.F. RADIO CLUB, INC.

CHEESE BITS

W3CCX
CLUB MEMORIAL CALL

ARRL Affiliated Club

Volume LXVIII | October 2025 | Number 10

PREZ SEZ:

October 2025

The fall VHF contest season is in full swing. September seemed to have a VHF or Microwave contest every week, October is not much different. On the plus side it forced me do a top to bottom assessment of my total station. I finally added DigiLo GPS locked boards to my 2M thru 432 MHz XVTRs. It is great to not have to shift the frequency knob to adjust the FT8 frequency window as I switch from band to band during a contest. Plenty of other high priority projects also revealed themselves during this process. The downside is there is never enough time! I thought when I actually retired, I would have plenty of free time to catch up with my to-do list. The reality is quite the opposite. I may need to revisit Einstein's Relativity Theory to figure out how this happened. In the meantime, the January contest is only three months away - are you really ready?

The September general club meeting was a real treat thanks to Andy Flowers' (K0SM/2) entertaining tutorial on his RainScatter application. The audio clips were eye opening, demonstrating the differences between CW, SSB, and NBFM contacts. We are working on getting the slides posted to the club website.

The October meeting is shaping up to be another mix of practical and educational information to help members improve their stations and learn from other VHF and above radio club members about microwave DX applications. First, will be bringing in the test equipment needed for another NF measurement testing session that was a big hit last year at this time. Gary WA2OMY and his team of RF experts will be ready to evaluate LNA's, filters and transverters on the bands from 2M to 10 GHz.

Second, Stan Dillon K4RCA and Dennis G. Sweeney WA4LPR from the Blue Ridge Microwave Society (BRMS) have agreed to share a slide show presentation they recently created which highlights the multiple non line of sight path methods that operators can use to extend microwave DX contacts. Their presentation is very timely as a number of Pack Rats are working on 10GHz stations for fixed and remote operation applications. Make sure to join us on Thursday October 16th at the Ben Wilson Senior Center to learn more.

The 2025 2M and 222 MHz Fall Sprints are now history. Both events had very good participation. The 222 Sprint activity increase has noticeably benefited from the Tuesday evening 222 Activity nights. Stations from Canada to the Carolinas were on the band during the sprint making it a fun evening no matter which mode of operation you prefer.

You can see the reported scores at www.3830scores.com. The 432 MHz and 902 and above sprints take place this month. This is a great opportunity to check out your UHF and microwave equipment before the colder weather rolls in.
Hope to see you at the meeting.

Phil WA3NUF

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PACK RAT COMMITTEES

January Contest	N3RG, N2NC, W2SJ, AA2SD
June Contest	N3YMS, WA3YUE, W2SJ
Fall Sprints	WA3NUF, W9KXI, WA3EHD, WS3O
Pack Rat Awards	WA3EHD, W2SJ
Quartermaster	Vacant
Membership:	Ray N3RG, W2SJ, WA3GFZ

PACKRAT BEACONS - W3CCX/B
144.300 (FN21be), 222.060 (FN20tk), 432.300 (FN20tk), 903.300 (FN21be), 1296.300 (FN20dh), 2304.300 (FN20tk), 3400.300 (FN20dh), 5760.300 (FN21be), 10,368.300 (FN20tk) See https://www.packratvhf.com/index.php/on-air for details

MONDAY NIGHT NETS
VHF/UHF Monday:

TIME	FREQUENCY	NET CONTROL
6:45PM	224.580 MHz	KB3MTW Michelle
7:00 PM	Packrat Talk Group	KA3WXV George
	See Packratvhf.com ON AIR for details	
7:30 PM	50.150 MHz	N3RG FM29ki Ray
8:00 PM	144.245 MHz	W2KV FN20ok 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.qth.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.qth.net

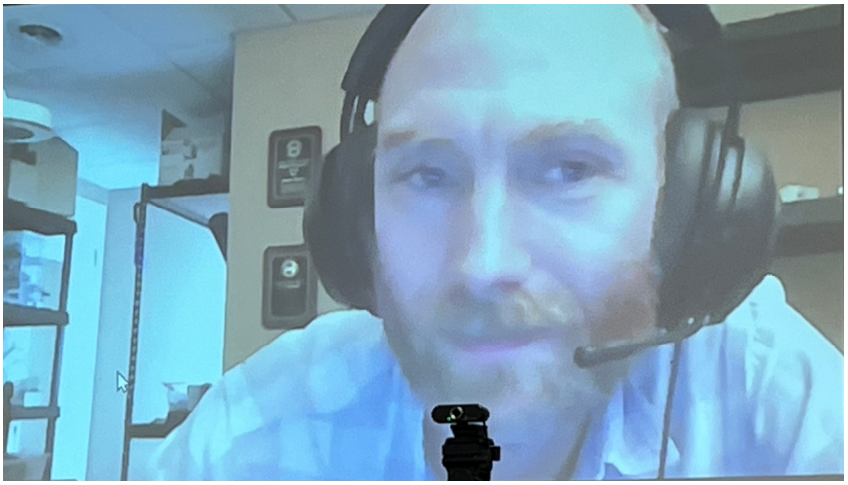
See the W3CCX Web page for specific information on joining.

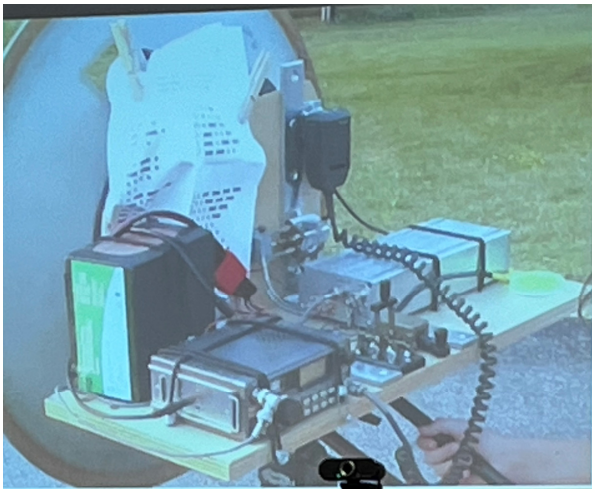
Packrats on Facebook
Use the browser link "www.facebook.com/PackRatVHF", or within Facebook search for the name "Mt Airy VHF Radio Club".

Pictures from the September Meeting

Some pictures from the September meeting. See Prez Sez for more details.

The Backup AV Crew





Andy Flowers and his portable 10 GHz station

October Pack Rat Calendar

2025

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
Draconids Meteor Shower October 6 – 10 Peak Oct 8 - 9	Orionids Meteor Shower October 2 - 31 Peak Oct 20 - 21	1 KC3BVL 1296 Net	2	3 KC3BVL Lower Four Nets	4/5
6 Pack Rat Nets	7 222 Activity Night	8 **432 Fall Sprint**	9 **BOD Meeting**	10 KC3BVL Lower Four Nets	11/12 **International EME Contest**
13 Pack Rat Nets	14 222 Activity Night	15 KC3BVL 1296 Net	16 **Pack Rats General Club Meeting**	17 KC3BVL Lower Four Nets	18/19 **Microwave Update Tucson, AZ**
20 Pack Rat Nets	21 222 Activity Night	22 KC3BVL 1296 Net	23	24 KC3BVL Lower Four Nets	25/26 **902 and Up Fall Sprint**
27 Pack Rat Nets	28 222 Activity Night	29 KC3BVL 1296 Net	30	31 KC3BVL Lower Four Nets Halloween	11/1 – 11/2 DST Ends
11/3 Pack Rat Nets	11/4 222 Activity Night	11/5 KC3BVL 1296 Net	11/6	11/7 KC3BVL Lower Four Nets	11/8 – 11/9 **ARRL EME Contest 50 to 1296 MHz**

Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club
`The Pack Rats`
2025 September VHF Contest
20 logs total 913,235 points

		Total		Contacts and Grids per band									
Call	QSOs	Grids	Score	6M	2M	222	432	902/3	1.3GHz	2.3GHz	3.4GHz	5.7GHz	10GHz
K1TEO	741	281	384540	195 62	185 52	96 39	125 43	39 26	55 25	25 17	12 10		9 7
K1RZ	439	203	158746	77 34	128 45	69 35	87 38	23 14	24 14	9 7	5 4	8 6	9 6
N2SCJ	294	78	30186	97 24	115 30	13 2	58 19		11 3				
WB2RVX	173	75	23025	43 19	38 13	22 9	40 17	5 3	13 5	4 2	3 3	4 3	1 1
W2KV	208	73	20075	46 15	95 28	30 14	37 16						
W9KXI	155	88	17424	55 30	52 29	25 13	20 13		3 3				
KC3NDU	178	83	16185	83 35	78 34		17 14						
W3ICC/R	181	44	14872	29 6	42 8	37 7	37 7		25 6	11 5			
N3ITT	162	79	14378	81 34	62 29	16 13	2 2		1 1				
W2SJ	138	57	11970	47 20	32 12	16 7	30 11		13 7				
K3MD	150	66	10956	71 29	65 27		12 9		2 1				
K2LNS	97	57	8892		55 25	16 13	16 10	4 4	5 4	1 1			
W3GAD	87	40	6200	17 8	26 10	12 5	12 5	7 5	9 5	4 2			
N2DEQ	96	42	5208	48 15	26 13	3 3	14 7	1 1	3 2	1 1			
KC3BVL	76	27	3780	14 4	18 6	11 4	18 5	3 1	7 4	4 2		1 1	
KE5NJ/R			3510										
WG3K	79	30	2370	48 17	31 13								
K0BAK/R	44	20	2100	6 2	6 2	6 2	6 2	5 2	6 2	5 2	2 2	2 2	
K1DS *	27	16	512	18 9	5 3		3 3		1 1				

* K1DS operated in EL96
* Score and log count not added to the club totals

Multi-Ops		Total		Contacts and Grids per band									
Call	QSOs	Grids	Score	6M	2M	222	432	902/3	1.3GHz	2.3GHz	3.4GHz	5.7GHz	10GHz
N2NT	598	162	125226	203 52	220 46	74 31	101 33						
Ops: N2NT N2NC W2RQ WW2Y													
N3NGE	267	132	53592	84 33	86 35	35 23	32 16	10 7	8 6	4 4	4 4	4 4	
Ops: N3NGE K3EGE													

Operating Notes

K0BAK Sept 2025 Rove Report

Pete Kobak

VHF Rover Configuration

My Subaru Forester is usually outfitted for HF vehicle-portable operations for POTA activations and state QSO parties in non-Winter months. For VHF contests, I've settled into a configuration to make moderate-distance FT8 contacts on the two overwhelmingly active bands with a 6m and 2m halo about 10 feet up, and short distance QRP contacts on 9 bands with use of Gary WA2OMY's microwave box on 903-5G. Because I'm devoting much less time to ham activities in favor of physical recovery activities, speed is the watchword…both speed of operations and speed of switching between the HF versus VHF Forester configurations.

The foundation components of the rover remain year-round: a 90Ah LiFePO4 station battery, high-current DC distribution to amplifiers and a low-current 14v boost regulator in the back, a front passenger seat desk for operating components, the Icom IC-705 QRP radio (HF, 6, 2, 432), a laptop computer sitting on a fold-down "desk" on the steering wheel (when stopped!), and all the cabling required for either HF or VHF running from the front station controls to the back amplifiers and antennae.

The 6m and 2m 100-200w TE amplifiers are added pretty quickly by having them and their 2x2 fan arrays mounted on a short foot-square wire rack with the wire rack mounted on a standard sized spanning rack shelf. Using brackets permanently installed on the floor of the back of the Forester, I can secure the amps' rack shelf and connect coax and PTT lines coming from the front in just minutes. 6 ga power cables for the amps are attached to two open positions in the permanently mounted standard rack shelf containing DC distribution and my 200w HF amplifier.

Having 222 SSB QRP capability is new this year, supplied by the toolbox-mounted 222 transverter + amplifier I described in an earlier article and at the last homebrew night (where I was a loser). After removing the fuse for the amplifier since I only need RF power from the transverter, the toolbox is placed in the rear passenger side floor and a 222 halo antenna is placed randomly. 10m IF and PTT lines come from the front operating position switches, and its power supply line comes from the back. Gary's microwave transverter box is mounted on the crowded desktop on top of the front passenger seat, behind the IC-705 but allowing the box's band switch to be operated.

I took pride in my TV van's band changing operations being automated to the point that I only had to operate the N1MM logger to change bands, and all the other components would follow. So my current band switching arrangement is a huge step backwards. The PTT output from the radio (Icom's "send" line) goes to a 4-position RCA stereo switch. The PTT destination is then switched between the microwave transverter, 222 transverter, or the 6m or 2m amplifiers. RF output from the radio goes to a manual BNC switch, where I can select the microwave transverter (432 IF), 222 transverter (28 IF), the 6m or 2m amplifier, or my special low-power wideband (160m-70cm) antenna consisting of 2.5 feet of insulated wire for QRP contacts on 6, 2, and 432. The BNC switch has one open position left, which I plan/hope to use to add a 10G transverter I bought to bring QRP capability up to a "full" 10 bands for the January contest.

Removing the HF screwdriver antenna and securing its cables to make room for a tilt-up mast system

for VHF antennas is one of the longer tasks because the coax and motor control connections to the screwdriver are well protected against corrosive road water. I also have a problem with getting dizzy and nauseous working on the ground and getting up so I don't look forward to that task.

The tilt-up mast is one of my earliest systems for VHF roving when I was using the family minivan and rotating antennas. When I was younger, I could add enough snap-together 2" mast sections to get 3 Yagis and a 6m Moxon tilted up to 30 feet with a stout rotator at the bottom. Alas, all I'm doing now is tilting a 6m and 2m halo up to be 10 feet above the ground, which are stabilized with thick bungee cords against the Forester's roofrails. Coax is run through a window opening with a foam pipe insulator providing a "seal" against modest moisture but not serious rain. While it would be great to get more height for those halos, with this arrangement. I don't need any antenna setup time when I get to my operating locations.

Saturday Fail

As I have during other September contests, my general plan was to operate conventionally on 6m and 2m Saturday to rack up contacts from 4 activated grids, then dedicate Sunday to rove to PackRat stations for short-distance contacts especially on microwaves.

The IC-705 includes the ability to operate the radio over IP networks in addition to support for a USB cable to a computer. While some desktop Icom radios include an Ethernet port for wired networks, the IC-705 supports networking only through Wi-Fi due to its small size. For some time, I had wanted to try a network connection instead of USB cable for basic CAT control and I/O audio streams (mostly for WSJT). I figured a wireless connection to the laptop would be easier, and I hoped it might reduce the RF noise transmission from the laptop to radio especially on 2m. To support this connectivity, I bought an overly expensive software package from Icom that translates IP radio connections to a virtual serial port for two-way CAT commands and virtual I/O audio ports for radio RX and TX.

Earlier this summer I finally got my act together to get my phone, laptop, and radio to communicate over Wi-Fi, using the phone as the network router while the phone also provided Internet hotspot networking vital for HF POTA and contests. The connections were bench-tested for WSJT use into a dummy load, and then in the field to make many FT8 contacts while activating a POTA park. I was confident the new laptop-to-radio wireless connection method was solid.

On Monday night PackRat nets before the contest weekend I was able to contact net control stations on 6m and 2m with my modest antennas and modest power, so I thought I was as tested as I could be. I removed the antennas for easier everyday driving till they were reinstalled on Saturday.

My plan was to activate the four grids around Gap PA at my tried-and-true locations in FM19, FN10, FM29, and FN20; and then make as many contacts as possible at a relative high spot near home in FN20 before heading home and removing the external antennas for my Sunday QRP rove.

Saturday afternoon featured intense sun in the clear sky that heated the car cabin quickly, but thankfully the outdoor air was below 90°. After arriving at an Amish elementary school lot in the open rolling farm hills west of Gap, I adjusted the orientation of the car for rear sun exposure and placed reflective window shades as needed. Radio and laptop connected through the phone as expected, and N1MM had two-way radio control. After trying but failing to make SSB contacts to the couple of stations I could hear on 2m (sigh), I fired up WSJT through N1MM.

Immediately I saw at least 5 stations that I thought I could contact on FT8. Surprisingly I couldn't get any stations to come back to me. Eventually I noticed on my transmit turn that although the radio would switch to transmit mode and input current increased a bit, the ALC, SWR, and power-out meters were dead zero.

It appeared that the radio was ready to transmit but was getting no audio input. Increasingly frustrated and desperate and eventually stupid attempts at fixing the problem were making things worse. When both brain and bladder were overloaded, I gave up to drive to the nearest Wawa and then home.

Should I have taken a long break then started from scratch to find the problem? Absolutely. But all I could think about was all the time I took to prepare for the contest, and thinking I had everything tested and was 100% confident. Every year my worsening memory makes fixing problems in the field harder, and I'm not proud that my reaction to this was to give up earlier than I should have.

Sunday Perfect

As if to maximize the contrast to the day before, my Sunday rove to PackRat driveways was as perfect as a rove gets. With the exception of a couple of PackRatstations' problems on particular bands, every expected contact was made without drama, and I kept remarkably on-schedule. I'm always concerned that with the manual selections I need to make to move up through the first five bands that I'm going fail to make a contact only because I made a selection error.

Since I didn't have to fumble with an HT this year or go into a house to make laser contacts (due to PackRat-hostile rule changes), I could log contacts into N1MM in real time rather than log on paper and later transfer to electronic log. This saves post-contest time and is more reliable.

My first stop at Gary WA2OMY's is the most important since Gary built the reliable microwave box that makes this driveway rove possible. Next was Tom KA3FQS, who is one of my easiest stops since he runs through his bands smoothly. Tom was apologetic because he wasn't as smooth as usual due to meds, though the apology was unnecessary since he was still better than average. After Tom was a relatively long ride north of Ottsville to visit Al N3ITT for the first time since I attended a PackRatpicnic at his place 10 years ago hoping to be accepted for membership. We were able to make 5 bands though we tried for a couple more he had troubles with. Al showed me his station and talked about his history with ham radio and the PackRats, though I had to cut our conversation short to avoid falling too far behind schedule.

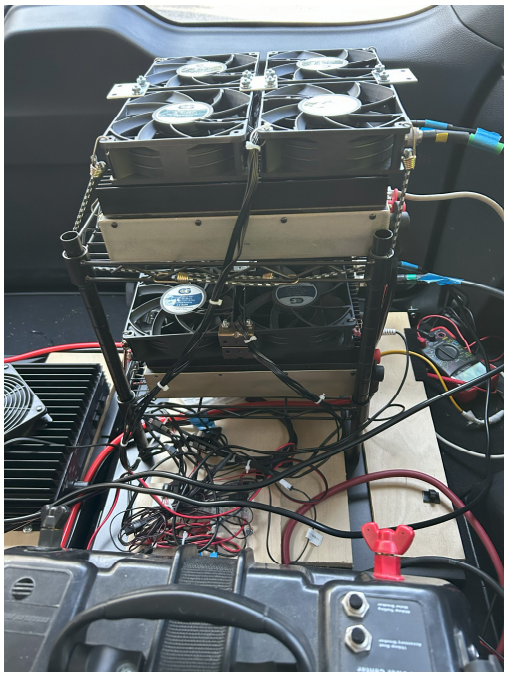
Back south I drove to see Doc W3GAD, a long-time regular on my driveway roves. His 7 bands went more smoothly than usual, partly because I didn't have to switch to HT contacts. Doc is traditionally my last PA stop before crossing the river to NJ, although my last few roves excluded my friends from down south due to medical problems or winter weather. I was glad I could include at least one SNJ PackRat this year when I drove the 90 minutes to Mike WB2RVX's superstation. My stops at Mike's are always among the smoothest runs through the bands, and only my second use of all of my 9 bands. I enjoyed a brief tour of his impressive station, with his operating position in the pleasant surroundings of the main floor, and his impressively organized RF equipment in the basement.

Last year in the Sept. contest my foot-limited rove included a stunt operation on the parking garage roof of the hospital formerly named Misericordia in West Philly about 400 feet from Jim KC3BVL's rooftop antenna farm. This year I initially balked at visiting Jim because it was such a slow drive across Center City to the northwest suburbs where my rove took me last year. However, with RVX being my only SNJ stop, my return trip home would take me up the Schuylkill Expressway so it would be a reasonable effort to reach the hospital.

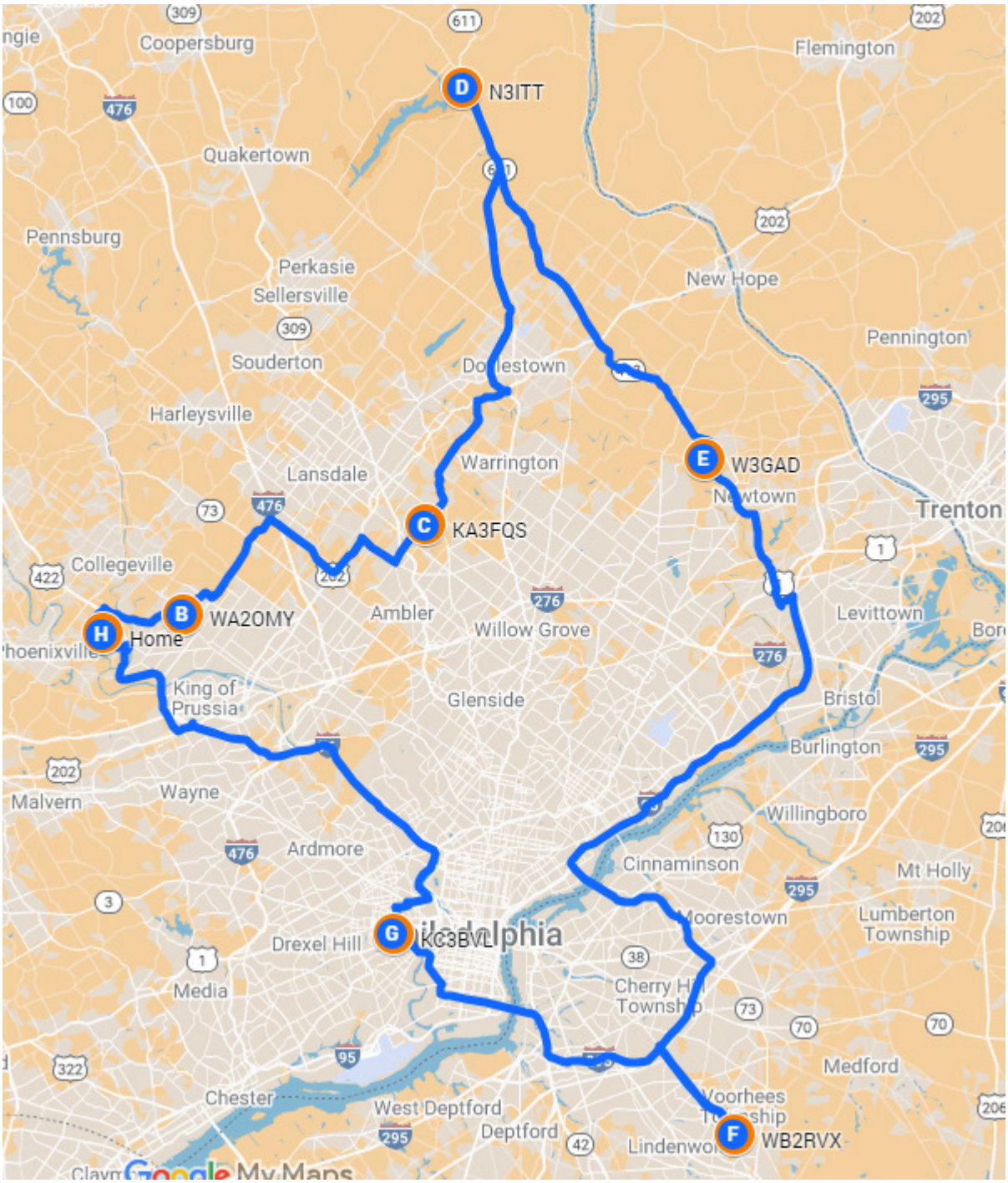
To get a clear shot at Jim's antennas I must park on the east roof edge perpendicular to parking lines. There was a car parked near that ideal location, so it took a bit of car manipulation to get oriented properly between the other car and a lighting pole. In addition, that other car was occupied and running but with no one visible in the front seat. I didn't know what was going on, but at that moment I wished I had taken full advantage of my concealed carry license in case the occupants were unhappy to see my headphones and

technical equipment. 😊

We ran though Jim's available bands more quickly than last year, though he had a problem on 5G preventing a contact that he later thought was related to outdoor electronics heating. After a brief comfort stop inside the hospital, I drove home west across the city and inner suburbs to the Blue Route, and home in time to watch the Eagles on a short time-delay.



Band	QSOs	Pts.	X	Grids	=	Points
50	6	6		2		12
144	6	6		2		12
222	6	12		2		24
432	6	12		2		24
903	5	15		2		30
1296	6	18		2		36
2304	5	20		2		40
3400	2	8		2		16
5760	2	8		2		16
Total	44	105		18+2		2100



The Resulting Log

```
START-OF-LOG: 3.0
LOCATION: EPA
CALLSIGN: K0BAK/R
CLUB: Mt Airy VHF RC
CONTEST: ARRL-VHF-SEP
CATEGORY-OPERATOR: SINGLE-OP
CATEGORY-ASSISTED: ASSISTED
CATEGORY-BAND: ALL
CATEGORY-MODE: MIXED
CATEGORY-POWER: LOW
CATEGORY-STATION: ROVER
CATEGORY-TRANSMITTER: ONE
CLAIMED-SCORE: 1944
OPERATORS: K0BAK
NAME: Peter Kobak
ADDRESS: 6 Dana Dr
ADDRESS-CITY: Collegeville
ADDRESS-STATE-PROVINCE: PA
ADDRESS-POSTALCODE: 19426
ADDRESS-COUNTRY: USA
GRID-LOCATOR: FN20
EMAIL:
CREATED-BY: N1MM Logger+ 1.0.10919.0
QSO:      50 PH 2025-09-14 1311 K0BAK/R             FN20   WA2OMY           FN20
QSO:     144 PH 2025-09-14 1313 K0BAK/R             FN20   WA2OMY           FN20
QSO:     222 PH 2025-09-14 1314 K0BAK/R             FN20   WA2OMY           FN20
QSO:     432 PH 2025-09-14 1315 K0BAK/R             FN20   WA2OMY           FN20
QSO:     902 PH 2025-09-14 1315 K0BAK/R             FN20   WA2OMY           FN20
QSO:    1.2G PH 2025-09-14 1316 K0BAK/R             FN20   WA2OMY           FN20
QSO:    2.3G PH 2025-09-14 1317 K0BAK/R             FN20   WA2OMY           FN20
QSO:    3.4G PH 2025-09-14 1317 K0BAK/R             FN20   WA2OMY           FN20
QSO:    5.7G PH 2025-09-14 1319 K0BAK/R             FN20   WA2OMY           FN20
QSO:      50 PH 2025-09-14 1411 K0BAK/R             FN20   KA3FQS           FN20
QSO:     144 PH 2025-09-14 1413 K0BAK/R             FN20   KA3FQS           FN20
QSO:     222 PH 2025-09-14 1414 K0BAK/R             FN20   KA3FQS           FN20
QSO:     432 PH 2025-09-14 1415 K0BAK/R             FN20   KA3FQS           FN20
QSO:     902 PH 2025-09-14 1418 K0BAK/R             FN20   KA3FQS           FN20
QSO:    1.2G PH 2025-09-14 1418 K0BAK/R             FN20   KA3FQS           FN20
QSO:    2.3G PH 2025-09-14 1419 K0BAK/R             FN20   KA3FQS           FN20
QSO:      50 PH 2025-09-14 1518 K0BAK/R             FN20   N3ITT            FN20
QSO:     144 PH 2025-09-14 1519 K0BAK/R             FN20   N3ITT            FN20
QSO:     222 PH 2025-09-14 1520 K0BAK/R             FN20   N3ITT            FN20
QSO:     432 PH 2025-09-14 1521 K0BAK/R             FN20   N3ITT            FN20
QSO:    1.2G PH 2025-09-14 1523 K0BAK/R             FN20   N3ITT            FN20
QSO:      50 PH 2025-09-14 1622 K0BAK/R             FN20   W3GAD            FN20
QSO:     144 PH 2025-09-14 1624 K0BAK/R             FN20   W3GAD            FN20
QSO:     222 PH 2025-09-14 1624 K0BAK/R             FN20   W3GAD            FN20
QSO:     432 PH 2025-09-14 1625 K0BAK/R             FN20   W3GAD            FN20
QSO:     902 PH 2025-09-14 1627 K0BAK/R             FN20   W3GAD            FN20
QSO:    2.3G PH 2025-09-14 1628 K0BAK/R             FN20   W3GAD            FN20
QSO:    1.2G PH 2025-09-14 1628 K0BAK/R             FN20   W3GAD            FN20
QSO:      50 PH 2025-09-14 1803 K0BAK/R             FM29   WB2RVX           FM29
QSO:     144 PH 2025-09-14 1805 K0BAK/R             FM29   WB2RVX           FM29
QSO:     222 PH 2025-09-14 1805 K0BAK/R             FM29   WB2RVX           FM29
QSO:     432 PH 2025-09-14 1806 K0BAK/R             FM29   WB2RVX           FM29
QSO:     902 PH 2025-09-14 1806 K0BAK/R             FM29   WB2RVX           FM29
QSO:    1.2G PH 2025-09-14 1807 K0BAK/R             FM29   WB2RVX           FM29
QSO:    2.3G PH 2025-09-14 1808 K0BAK/R             FM29   WB2RVX           FM29
QSO:    3.4G PH 2025-09-14 1808 K0BAK/R             FM29   WB2RVX           FM29
QSO:    5.7G PH 2025-09-14 1809 K0BAK/R             FM29   WB2RVX           FM29
QSO:      50 PH 2025-09-14 1914 K0BAK/R             FM29   KC3BVL           FM29
QSO:     144 PH 2025-09-14 1915 K0BAK/R             FM29   KC3BVL           FM29
QSO:     222 PH 2025-09-14 1916 K0BAK/R             FM29   KC3BVL           FM29
QSO:     432 PH 2025-09-14 1917 K0BAK/R             FM29   KC3BVL           FM29
QSO:     902 PH 2025-09-14 1920 K0BAK/R             FM29   KC3BVL           FM29
QSO:    1.2G PH 2025-09-14 1921 K0BAK/R             FM29   KC3BVL           FM29
QSO:    2.3G PH 2025-09-14 1922 K0BAK/R             FM29   KC3BVL           FM29
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Rover Report from AA2SD and KE5NJ

An Early Morning Camp Fire at Base Camp During an Early Morning Start FN20 100 Mile Overlook KE5NJ/R and AA2SD/R

AA2SD/R and KE5NJ/R Pack Rat Rovers Team Up for the September VHF Contest in the Poconos.

Watch the You Tube here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XolHk7WTANk

Pocono Mountains Sept 13-15th 2025 AA2SD/R KE5NJ Rover

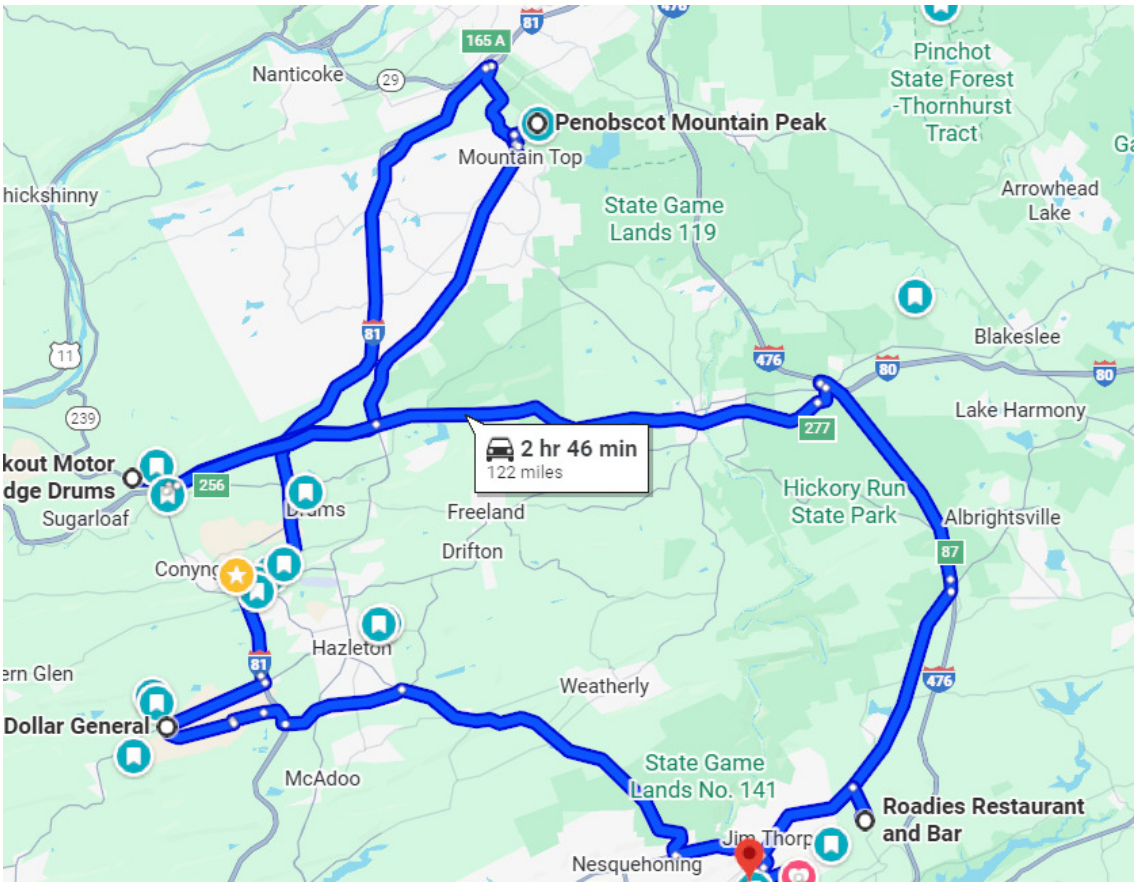
Saturday Contest Start - We started this Rove at the beginning of the contest with (2) different overlooks, with Chris KE5NJ/R located on FN20 on top of the 100 Mile overlook at FlagStaff Mountain. I started at Big Pocono State Park FN21 for the start of the contest at 2200 ft elevation. Overall Conditions for 2 and 6 Mtrs appeared to be generally flat for the entire contest. During the first (4) hours I worked 50 QSO's all on the phone. My microwave system switch was not working so I moved back to a (4) band rover only. During the evening at base camp we operated FT8 using a smaller moxon antenna and 2 mtr beam.

Sunday We Grid Circled to the following Locations as Tandem Rovers

During Sunday (2) Rovers Operated in Tandem - as a unique experience during Sunday Chris and I operated as (2) separate rovers in each grid square we visited (3) additional Grid Squares from overlook areas only. Operating in this fashion we will be able to pick up our count of contacts as operators could easily work (2) rovers on 4 bands from one grid location. We visited (5) stops during Sunday to maximize our foot print.

Grid Circle Plan for Rovers During Sunday

FN20 - 100 Mile Overlook Starting Point 1500 Ft
FN10 - New Location at 1800 feet across from a Dollar Store in Hazelton PA
FN11 - Lookout Motor Lodge in Drums PA .operated from the parking lot overlook
FN21 - Pensacone Mountain Fire House Location open field 1800
FN20 - Penns Peak Roadies Restaurant 1500 Feet



Grid Circling Plan During Sunday allowed us to hit (4) Grids as Tandem Rovers all from Overlooks in the Pocono Mountains

Base Camp Set up at the 100 Mile Overlook - We set up base camp on top of a camping ridge located in Jim Thorpe Pa at 1500 feet. We used this position to operate in the evening on FT8 and regroup for the next day. As part of our Roving and Camping experience my XYL Donna had prepared a full on catered camping menu for each evening, along with a healthy breakfast to power us for the day. We enjoyed steaks on the grill, home made chili, western omelets and flap jacks for breakfast. We also would like to thank **Andrea K2EZ/R** Rover for coming by in the evening with a friendly and informative visit with us and enjoying some home made Chili over the open fire at camp side.

Western Omelettes prepared on the Mountain for the Rover

Equipment Challenges for Microwaves - after testing my new bands three times, the switching arrangement did not function and I abandoned the strategy to run these bands. No changes to the system, and a driveway test, basement and net test before the rove checked out. I think the issue is vibration and we will trouble shoot this with Ray and it get it ready on the bands for the next Contest. Being flexible as a Rover and adjusting on the fly is important.

Summary Initial Results from the Trip - Overall this was an “epic first time Rover” trip we combined camping in a beautiful natural overlook, with great food, excellent camaraderie and learned how to Grid Chase as Tandem rovers. We also worked to trouble shoot some equipment issues and Chris came fully prepared with all of the camping gear and back up tools and essentials. Overall the band conditions were mediocre at best, and we did not enjoy any 6 mtr openings during the weekend. The entire focus was to have “Fun and Play Radio” and provide a target for other operators to help with their scores. Thanks to all that worked us during this week, and you can expect more Tandem Rover Plans from Chris and Myself during the upcoming events. We also would like to extend the invitation to any other local Rovers to join in with us as we plan our next Grid Chase Rove Plan.

Raw Score: 208 Qpts x 40 Mults = **8,320**

Note: The raw score, QSO points and mult totals are estimates based solely on the individual log contents and are not used during subsequent log checking.

CallSign Used : AA2SD/R

Operator Category : SINGLE-OP

ARRL Section : SNJ

Club/Team : Mount Airy Pack Rats

Software : N1MM Logger+ 1.0.10888.0

Band	QSOs	Pts	Grd	Pt/Q
50	13	13	2	1.0
50	42	40	11	1.0
144	40	35	11	0.9
222	26	49	7	1.9
420	34	58	10	1.7
Total	155	195	41	1.3

Score : 7,995

Rig :

A special thanks to W2EA South Jersey Mountain Topper Group, all of the Pack Rats and Andrea K2EZ/R , Dave KR1Z, Mike WB2RVX, Ray N3RG, Donna my XYL for the excellent cuisine, and all other Rovers and operators in support of our efforts.

Please watch the video at the following link

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XolHk7WTANk

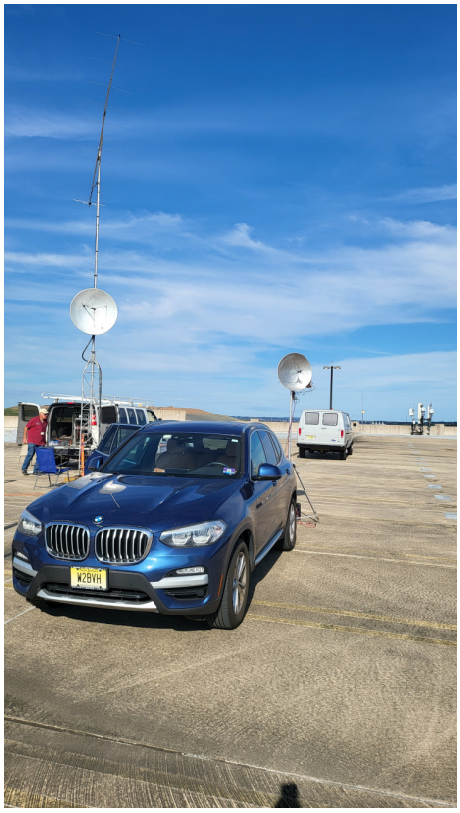
73

Scott AA2SD/R and Chris KE5NJ/R Rover

SHF From the Deck

Here are a few pics that Joe KC2OBI took of Warren WB2ONA and me on 10GHz 9/21/25. We got set up around 3pm Sunday. This was my first time on 10GHz and I had my 1st Q ever on that band with Ray N3RG. Been ham since 1963, so it only took 62 years to get on X band. Had some trouble with the rig but was able to resolve it with Warren's help. I worked the gang (K1RZ, W1GHZ, K3WHC) out on Block Island from central NJ (244 Km) which was a thrill. Warren did well with his 4ft dish and well engineered rig. He tried to set up for 24 GHz but there was too much to do to get it going, and not enough time. Maybe next year. My rig still needs some work (which is hard to do --- making useful measurements at 10 GHz is a completely different animal than 2 GHz and under). I'll get there.... In the mean time it's pretty functional and I'm very happy to add another band.

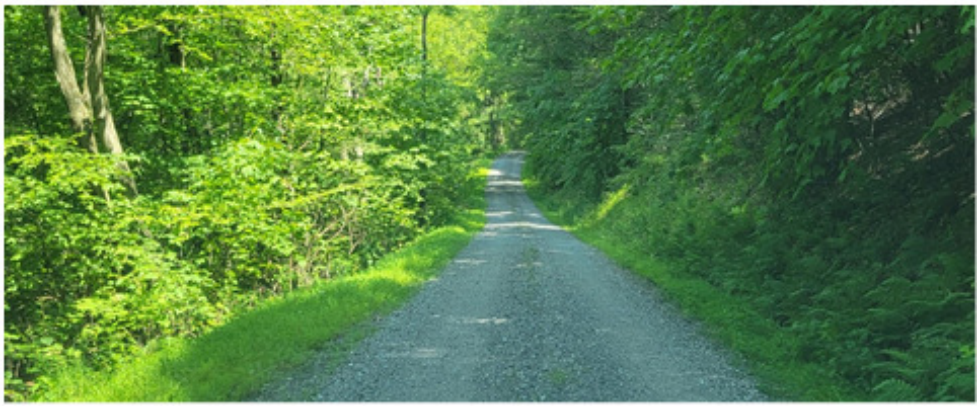
73,
Lenny W2BVH



SOTA Activation of Broad Mountain

Site details:
Summit Code: W3/SV-018 Elevation: 2388ft
Grid: FN10dq Lat/Long: 40.6815, -77.7386
County: Huntingdon, PA

This Summits-on-the-Air (SOTA) site is located within Rothrock State Forest, Pennsylvania. Specifically, it is at the Greenwood Fire Tower. This is a lovely location in the Central PA mountains. Once you get to the state forest, you have 30 minutes of driving on gravel forest roads. At the time of my visit, these were in pretty good shape, but at other times of the year, they can take a beating from the weather.



It was a short 2000ft hike, up-hill, from the parking spot to the fire tower. Unfortunately, there is no view from the base of the fire tower, and climbing it is prohibited.

This summit actually took me two attempts to activate it. The first try was on Friday, 11 July 2025. I took the Icom 705 and my Arrow Antenna. 10W. Only made two contacts, on 2m FM. W3AWG and KC3CYM. This was not that surprising, as it was a Friday afternoon. I guess folks were still at work. Thus, this activation was a failure.

Interestingly, there was a 100km trail marathon the following day, which local hams were doing radio support for. The runners had 23 hours to complete it. I cannot imagine running 100km. *In the woods.* ***Overnight****. That is some serious level of commitment.*

So, I had run out of time, and had to pack up and retreat. I knew I was going to be back in the area in a few weeks, and planned to try again.

The story has to take a diversion here. At the 2024 Hamvention in Xenia, I had purchased a Wolf River Coil antenna setup. I had heard good things about them, and thought it would be useful for my SOTA activations. Up to this point, all my activations have been on 2m FM and SSB, never had I taken HF gear. All the reviews I found said how easy it was to get on the air with this antenna.

When I set it up and tried it out, I could not get it to tune up. No matter how I adjusted it, it would not tune. Actually, nothing I did to adjust it made any difference to the analyzer. Looking online, including the company support FAQ, all the answers pointed to "bad coax". Well, the coax tested fine. No one had the answer to my problem. Frustrated, I threw it in a box and decided to "think about it" for a while.

Time passed, and I was checking out something else with a multimeter, and thought to meter the base of the antenna for conductivity. It was open, at DC, as it should be. Connecting coax, it was no longer open at DC, but presenting about 2M ohms of resistance. Now, this was interesting. Again, the coax itself was fine.

Investigating it further, it turns out that the coax to 3/8 stud had a malformed insulator in it. Some of the deformity is visible, but who knows what the rest of it looked like inside.

Conveniently, I had another one of these parts, and swapped it out. The antenna was now tunable!

I went back to Rothrock on Saturday, 2 August 2025. This time, I took just my Yaesu FT8900 and the Arrow Antenna. This puts out 50W, instead of the IC-705's 10W. But again, I only managed two contacts on 2m FM. And one of those was pre-arranged. It was my daughter, who was hiking elsewhere in the forest that day.

However, I brought another friend along, who owns a Yaesu FT891. I setup my Wolf River antenna, and we got it tuned beautifully on 40m. Using his radio, I made two more contacts on this band. One was a special event station, KD3KA near Pittsburgh, which was promoting the 100th anniversary of a KDKA shortwave experiment. The other contact was W2RES in SNJ. Both were strong contacts. These were my first SOTA contacts on HF.

Then, I was out of time. I was needed elsewhere and had to pack up. At least I got the required four contacts. This is why I don't spot myself for these activations. I can never guarantee when I will be onsite, or how long I can stay.

One of these days, I will have a day on a mountain and not have anything else on my agenda.

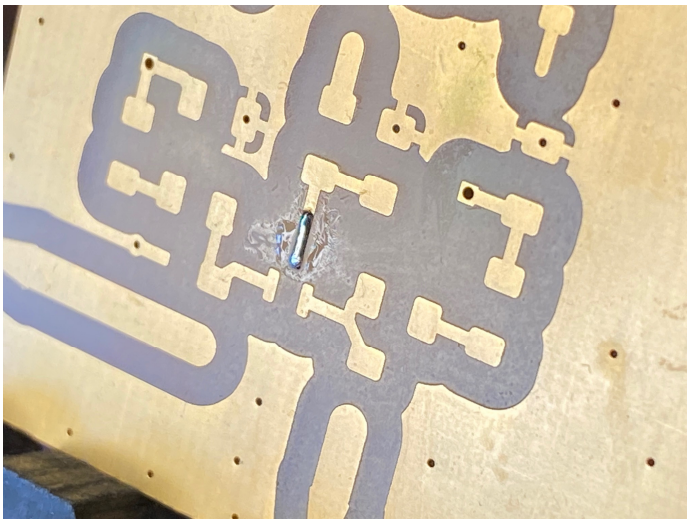
-Bill, WS3O

Primative SMD Assembly

By Ron NA2O

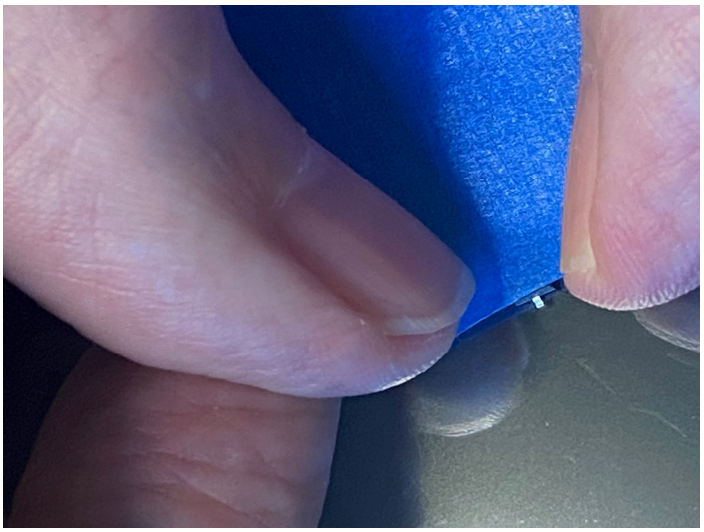
I've been looking at N1JEZ presentation of how he runs a reflow oven for assembling printed circuit boards, and I think it is time to resurrect my old pizza warmer. But here's a look at how I've been doing it so far.

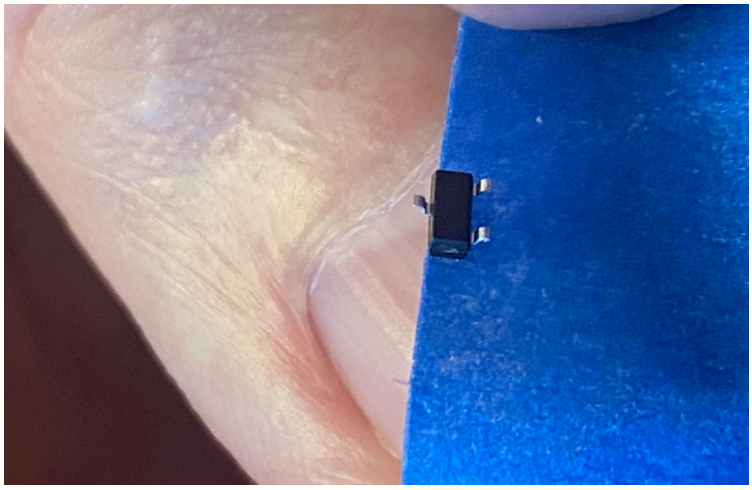
As so many (looking at you, W1GHZ) have described, start with a small amount of solder on one pad of the component as in Fig 01.



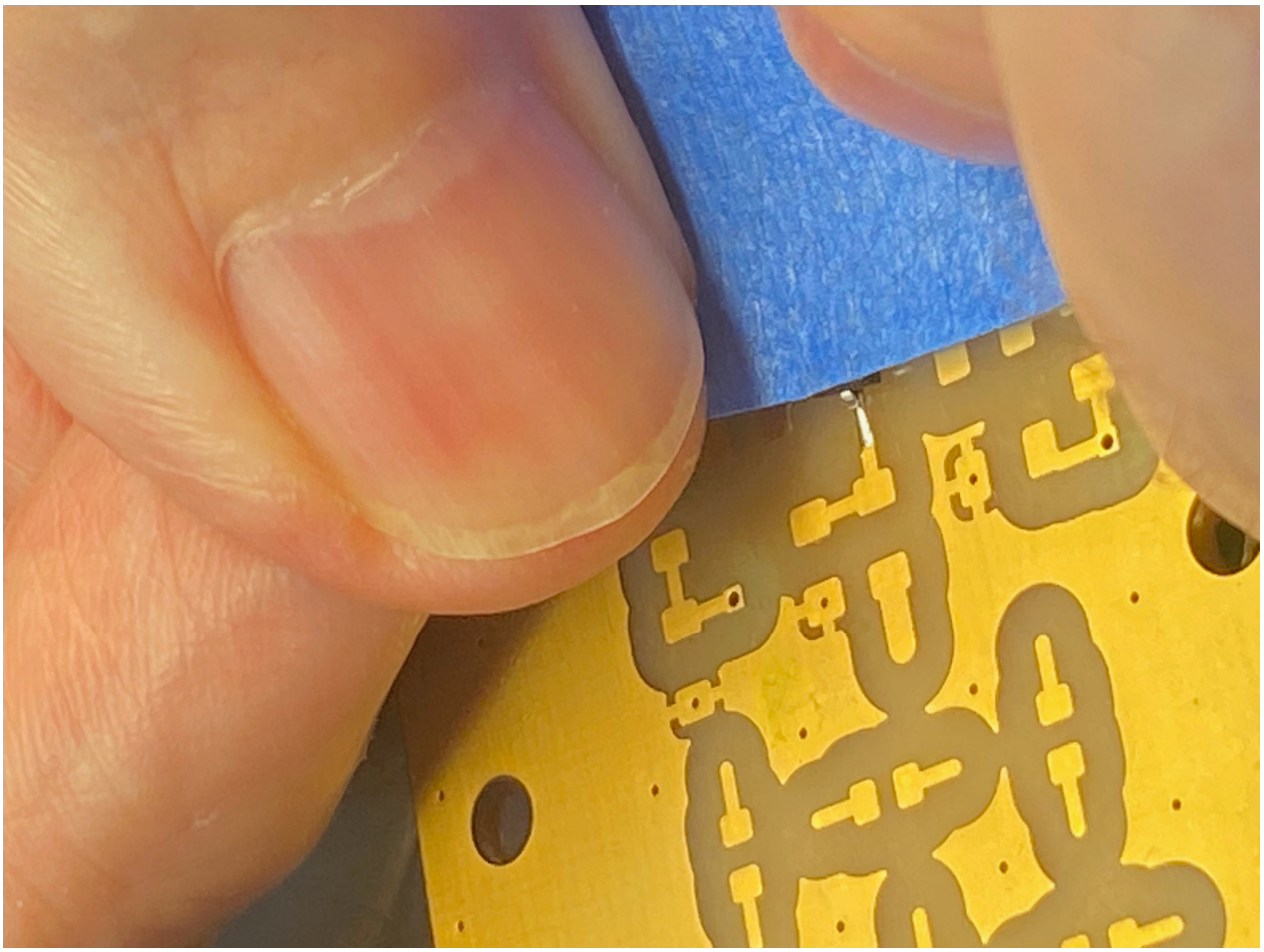
That's a lot of solder, about 20dB too much, but I left it alone. It seems every time I touch the board with the iron, it gets messier. Dump the component to be placed where you can find it. It will always be upside down, Fig 02.

Flip it over, get it on its feet and approach it from behind with a small piece of masking tape. Catch the little bugger on the edge of the tape as in Fig 03 and Fig 04.

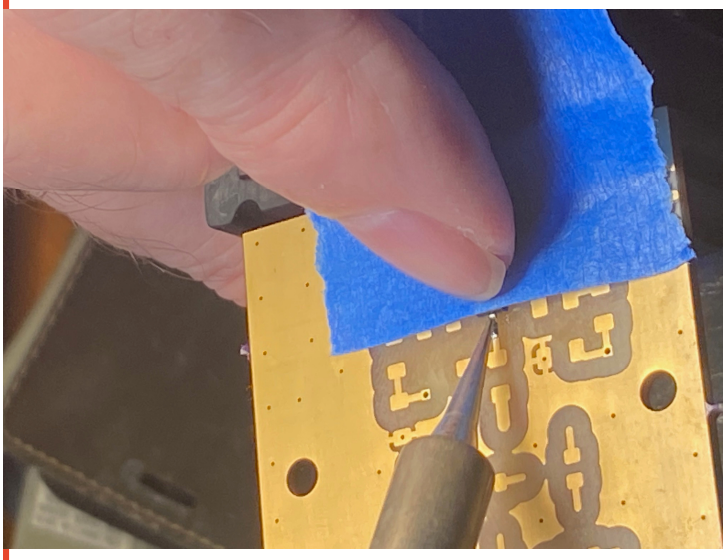




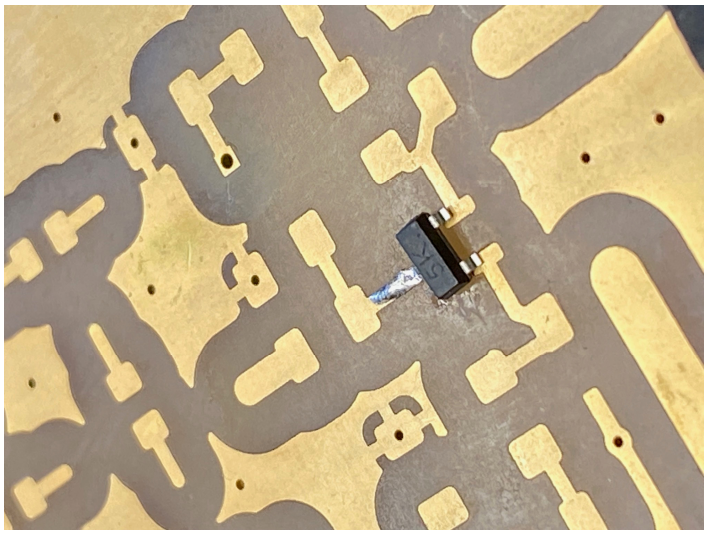
Carefully place the component on the pre-tinned pad, and use the tape to help align and hold the piece with the pad, Fig 05.



A touch of the iron on the component lead and pad Fig 06 and you're done.



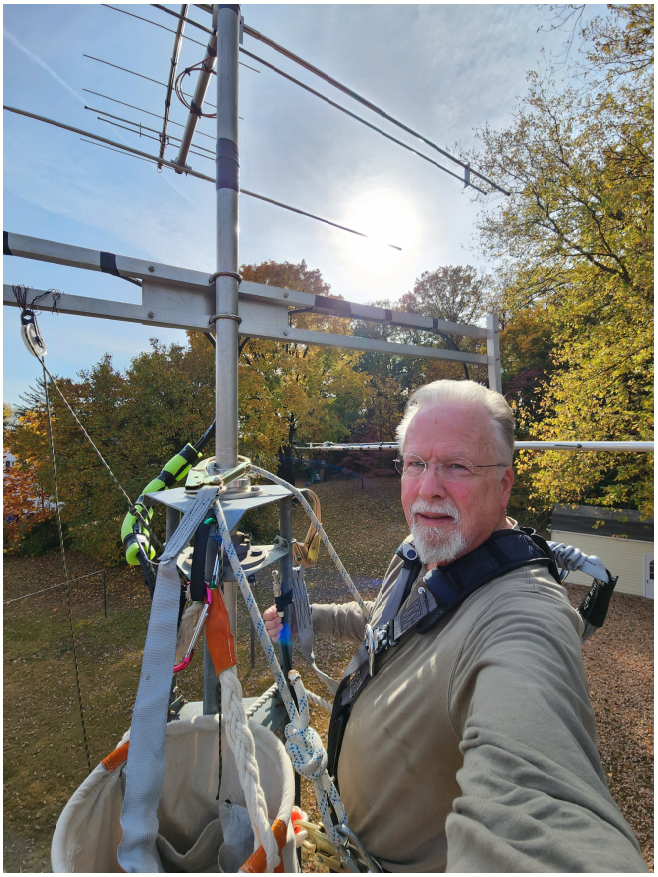
Pull the tape off, clean up the flux, Fig 07, and move to the next component.



A HAM Returns to the Area

For twenty years, I was a Philly area expatriate living in central Massachusetts. My wife and I dropped everything, and within 2 months of accepting a position at Bose Corporation in Framingham, we moved to the rural town of Sturbridge. I immediately cleared about an acre of heavy woods, and began building a brand new station in FN32. I had two towers, HF yagis, verticals, and yagis for the lower two VHF bands. When I retired in 2016, we immediately planned our move back home to South Jersey to rejoin our two grown children, and now our grandchildren. Just as I had put it all up, I had the arduous task of dismantling everything for the move back, and do it alone. With tower sections stacked, and hundreds of feet of Heliax spooled up, two 40' moving vans brought my gear and our belongings back to New Jersey, this time to Cinnaminson (FM29) for what we planned would be our 'final resting place'.

Living on a very visible corner property was much different than living in the woods of my former QTH, and working within the confines of township regulations, while considering my ever advancing age, I immediately set out to construct a very modest VHF/UHF tower for the bottom five bands. I wanted one that could be built and maintained by myself with little to no assistance from others. This is just how I work.



Little by little, my tower construction project came to life, from hauling countless 80lb. sacks of concrete, mixing and pouring the tower base, and guy anchors, to raising tower sections, then building and hoisting the antennas, it was done by myself. The most challenging step was hoisting the 15' mast that was to support the five antennas. To accomplish this, I assembled the sections with the mast nested inside the lower section. Using a pulley block, I hoisted the heavy mast up, inside the sections, and thru two thrust bearings at the top which were separated by a space of perhaps eight inches.

The two bearings would keep the mast standing vertical so the antennas could be sequentially mounted without the assembly cocking to one side. One by one, the antennas were hauled aloft and mounted to the mast which was then hoisted up thru the thrust bearings and locked into place at the next mounting location. For 70 and 23 centimeters, I built a wide H frame of sorts to accommodate the frequencies I was working with. Because of the size of the frame, these ended up being the bottom antennas on the stack. My singular failure in this whole project was my inability to

hoist, or tram my large 6 element 6m yagi onto the tower. It was too heavy to manhandle alone, and I couldn't figure out a way to tram the antenna by myself. So unfortunately I had to replace it with a 3 element yagi.

Back on the ground, all transmission lines are contained in buried PVC conduit.

They emerge at the opposite end right at the entrance panel. To fabricate the panel, I removed a pane of glass in the basement window and replaced it with an eighth inch thick aluminum panel. The panel in turn is connected to a single point ground network.

At the top is a Super 22 for 1.25m FM. Under that is a 2m y weagi by Directive Systems. Under that is the little 3 element yagi by Directive Systems. Finally on the bottom is my homebrew H frame which holds a 23cm Directive Systems looper on one side, and a 70cm M2 yagi on the other side. I chose antenna designs that utilized a T-match feed. A Directive Systems yagi for 1.25m is on a separate mast, off the tower.

The tower uses two TB3 thrust bearings to prevent the mast from cocking to the side within the tower when raising or lowering it.

The antenna stack is easily turned by an Alfa-Spid RAK rotator. I chose to mount the rotator well down the tower by using a Penninger mast coupler along with a mounting shelf from Norm's Fabrication which allows mounting in any bay along a section of 25G. A work platform allows me to stay aloft for hours if necessary without fatigue. The platform also doubles as a flat surface for any soldering or other work.

After many months of working on it when I could, my tower project is almost complete. I hope to work you soon.

Tom K3GM

Editor Emeritus Notes

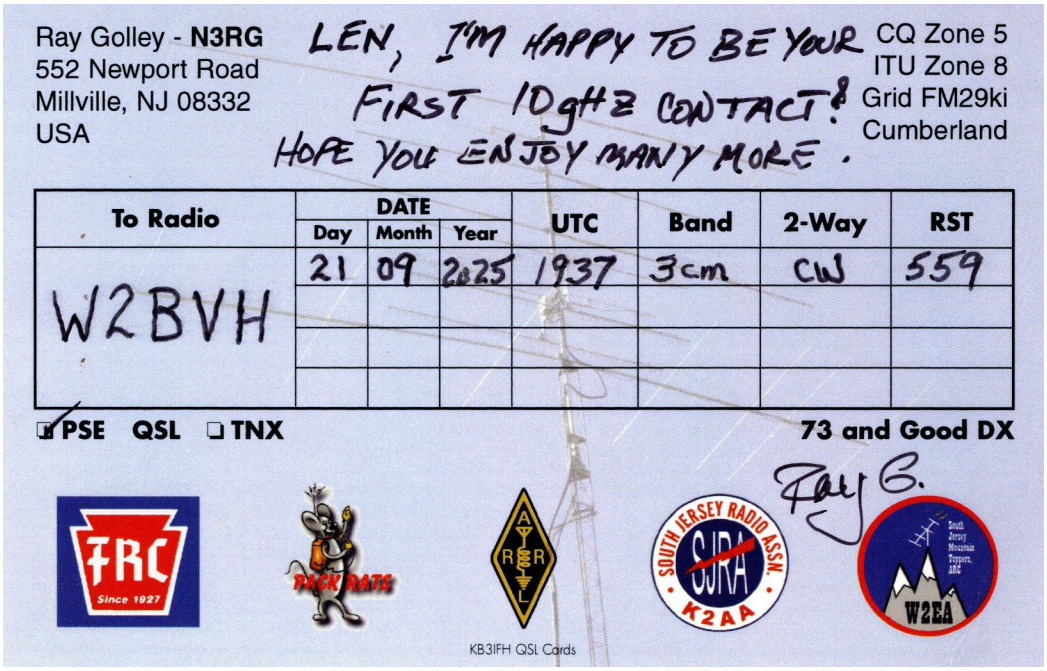
Lenny

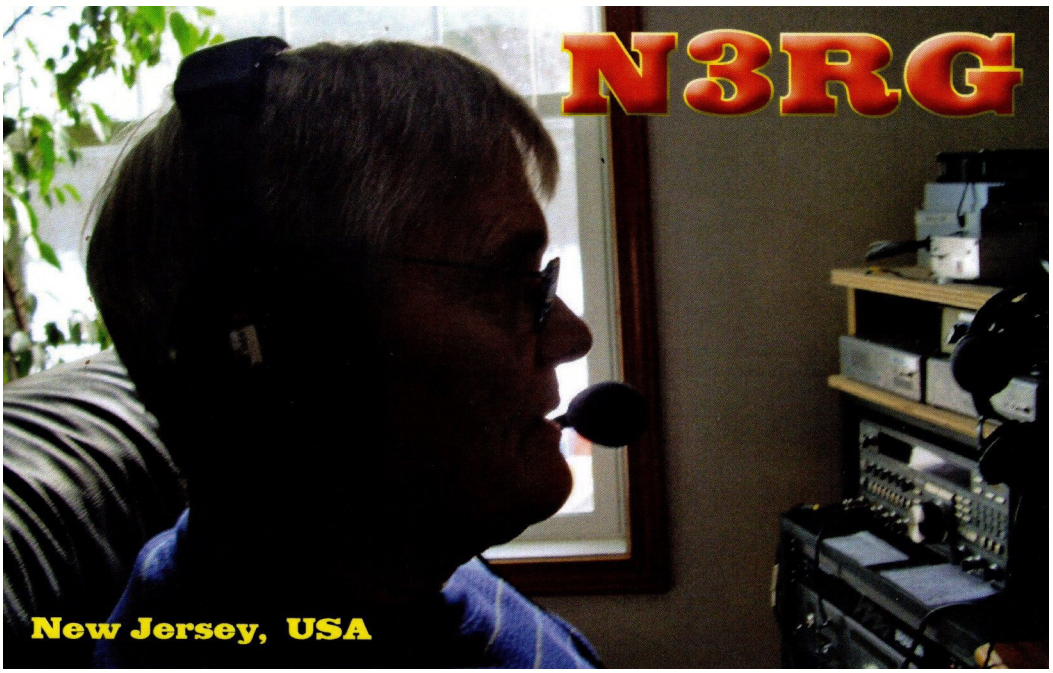
To: cheesebits@packratvhf.com · Mon, Sep 29 at 10:39 PM

Message Body

Attached photo of QSL card from Ray N3RG for my 1st 10 GHz QSO. (only took 62 years to get on this band). Better late than never ;-)

73,
Lenny W2BVH





Mount Airy VHF Radio Club, Inc. Warminster, PA.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Call KC3FQF Class E License Expiration date 10/05/2035 Application date 08/23/2025	
Name ROSTISLAV GRINBERG	E-mail address XXXXXX @XXXXXXXXXX
Address XXX XXXX XX XXXXXXX XXX	Spouse Name* Call*
City WILMINGTON	
State DE Zip 19810	*(optional)
Phone XXX XXX XXXX	ARRL Member? ☐Y ☒N ☐Life (check one)
Business	Other Radio Clubs
Bus. Addr.	Other Hobbies*
Cellphone XXX XXX XXXX	Grid Locator: FM29FT (6 digit)

Station Equipment

Band MHz	Radio	Output power	Antenna
A 50	FLEX 6600/IC-9100	100	3EL/HOLOOP
B 144	IC9100/TRANSVERTER	100	HOLOOP
C 222	TRANSVERTER	50	
D 432	IC9100/TRANSVERTER	100	HOLOOP
9 903	FLEX 6600/TRANSVERTER	10	
E 1296	FLEX 6600/TRANSVERTER/905	10	VERTICAL
F 2304	IC-905	10	COLINEAR
G 3400			
H 5760	IC-905		COLINEAR
I 10368	IC-905	0.5	COLINEAR/DISH
Low Band	FLEX 6600/IC-9100/746PRO/YEASU-101MP	100	DIPOLE/OCF

Applicant's reasons for joining this club:

WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WEAK SIGNAL WORK AND FIND HAMS TO TALK TOO ON HIGHER BANDS, HOPING TO GROW MY PORTABLE/ROVER OPERATIONS ON HIGHER BANDS AS I LEARN MORE ABOUT THEM

Reasons for Sponsoring

Rosti sought out our club due to his interest in the higher bands. He Zoomed in on our 8-21-2025 PackRats meeting to understand what we are about. He is a very active CW HF POTA operator and already has the equipment and interest to grow his portable operations to include the VHF to Microwaves, and Roving. He came to the PackRats because of that interest.	**Rosti has an ICOM 905 and Flex 6600 he already has access to 1296,3400,903 and 10Ghz. He is a very active POTA operator and portable operator due to his HOA restrictions, also a CW operator. Rosti would like to Rove locally and participate in the VHF Contests. He is new to weak signals and also is looking to expand his antennas as he learns more. He would be a perfect candidate with good technical background, and has the high energy to become another Rover for the Pack Rats, I am pleased to sponsor him as a candidate for the Pack Rats.**
Sponsor 1 call & initials K1RZ DCP	**AA2SD Scott D**

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Dues Fee: $25.00 Paid Date: Recommended by the Bd of Dirs: Voted on date: Result: Badge Fee: $_____ Paid Date: **Rev 8/2023**	**ACTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS** **BOD approval 9/11/2025 de RG**

Antenna Legislation

Don't delay and write your Congressman and your Senator! See below makes it quick and easy.

H.R. 1094 House Bill and S. 459 Senate Bill are in Congress to protect the rights of 3/4 million hams to put-up their antennas! (See ARRL email below.)

H.R. 1094 House Bill
https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.congress.gov%2Fbill%2F119th-congress%2Fhouse-bill%2F1094%2Ftext&data=05%7C02%7C%7Cbabaa618caca44b7b69508ddf6cbae8d%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638938076846246596%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=rtp19fz%2Bu%2BWEgeicVnxa1Xp%2FIl8d%2BhhGwimRNdfwHP0%3D&reserved=0

S. 459 Senate Bill
https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.congress.gov%2Fbill%2F119th-congress%2Fsenate-bill%2F459%2Ftext&data=05%7C02%7C%7Cbabaa618caca44b7b69508ddf6cbae8d%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638938076846259581%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=knrDZdYZbymnKbnlJfr2EVnrRo7LrLzOpn%2FofDe%2BAVE%3D&reserved=0

So don't delay and write your Congressman and your Senator!

All you need to do is sign-up at:

ARRL - Help Pass The HOA Legislation
https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsend-a-letter.org%2Fhoa%2F&data=05%7C02%7C%7Cbabaa618caca44b7b69508ddf6cbae8d%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638938076846272515%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=0MrDrn64FB9g78KIKjf1D0%2FMg11gHPLnCbYkyYacBbQ%3D&reserved=0

Your letter will be HAND DELIVERED to both your Congressman AND your Senator! 73, Rick K1DS

Subject: ARLS001 Hams Needed to Track NASA Moon Mission

QST de W1AW

From ARRL Headquarters
Newington, CT September 29, 2025
To all radio amateurs

ARLS001 Hams Needed to Track NASA Moon Mission
The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is seeking volunteers to passively track the 2026 Artemis II Orion spacecraft as the crewed mission travels to the Moon and back to Earth.

The story on the 2026 Artemis II Orion project can be found online at: www.nasa.gov/mission/artemis-ii

The Artemis II test flight will send NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman, KF5LKT; Victor Glover, KI5BKC; and Christina Koch, along with Canadian Space Agency (CSA) astronaut Jeremy Hansen, KF5LKU, on an approximately 10-day mission around the Moon.

Targeted for no later than April 2026, the mission will rely on NASA's Near Space Network and Deep Space Network for primary communications and tracking support throughout its launch, orbit, and reentry. However, with a growing focus on commercialization, NASA wants to further understand industry's tracking capabilities.

This collaboration opportunity builds upon a previous request released by NASA's Space Communication and Navigation Program (SCaN) during the Artemis I mission in 2022. Ten volunteers successfully tracked the uncrewed Orion spacecraft on its journey thousands of miles beyond the Moon and back.

One of those volunteers tracking in 2022 was Scott Chapman, K4KDR, of Montpelier, Virginia. "Sometimes it's what you don't know that makes this kind activity interesting," said Chapman. "All I had was a small S-band dish and receiver, and wasn't sure what I could or couldn't hear...but when I started hearing the signals...it made everything worth it."

Chapman said he felt good about the whole process and, while it was interesting, it was also a lot of fun!

There were also other participants during the Artemis I mission, including international space agencies, academic institutions, commercial companies, nonprofits, and private citizens who were also attempting to receive Orion's signals. Chapman added that NASA is also looking for commercial partnerships to share in the process.

If you're interested in volunteering for next year's event, all of the information can be found at: https://sam.gov/
The response deadline is October 27, 2025, at 5:00 PM EDT.

ARRL The National Association for Amateur Radio®

Hamfests

RF Hill Hamfest 2.0 October 19, 2025
http://www.rfhillarc.club

Beacon Notice

Packrats,

As of 9:15 this morning the 1296 beacon was taken off the air and removed from our Pottstown site. We estimate about 2-3 weeks off the air so the beacon can be upgraded with a combination digital modulation and CW. Digital modulation mode will be Q65, additional details will be published when we are ready to re-install the beacon at Pottstown.

There are other beacon improvements being worked on for other bands, again, these details will be announced when we are ready to install.

Your Pottstown beacon committee,

Len N3NGE, Gary WA2OMY, Bruce WA3YUE, Warren, WB2ONA.

Regularly Scheduled On The Air Events

VHF/UHF Monday - Every Monday except holidays and contest nights the following nets are held, 224.58 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, 144.245 MHz USB NCS W2KV FN20os at 8:00 PM, 222.125 MHz USB NCS KC3BVL FM29jw at 8:30 PM, 432.110 USB NCS WB2RVX FM29mt at 9:00 PM.

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 .

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.

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

SWAP SHOP

We would like to gauge the effectiveness of the Swap Shop page. Can you respond to cheese-bits@packratvhf.com with a brief note on the number of replies you received as a result of your ad? (Even if zero, the information will help guide improvements needed)

For Sale Wiltron 87478-20, 10 MHz to 20 GHz synthesized sweep generator. No manuals or accessories. Local pickup only. Make an offer.
Tom ka3fqs@gmail.com

For Sale Two RLC Electronics S-8148 six position coax switches NOS, 15 V Vcc (will probably work fine at 13 V), 5 V to select. SMA connectors. $20 each.
Tom Frederiksen ka3fqs@gmail.com

https://microwaveupdate.org/MUD2025

Editor's Notes

There was a lot of input to this issue of Cheese Bits by club members. Thank you.

When submitting material please don't submit it in .pdf form as it makes it difficult or impossible to incorporate in the Publisher file. Many times the .pdf is taken from a screen capture which reduces its resolution. Microsoft Word is the preferred format for text and .jpg is the preferred format for images.

I will not be able to attend the next general club meeting so if someone who is in attendance would take pictures and submit a short write up that would be much appreciated.

Again thanks to my wife for proof reading this issue and her sometimes helper Buster the cat.

Tom KA3FQS

TO:

MT. AIRY VHF RADIO CLUB, INC.