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

CHEESE BITS

W3CCX
CLUB MEMORIAL CALL

ARRL Affiliated Club

Volume LXIX | March 2026 | Number 3

PREZ SEZ: (March 2026)

This year's winter weather has been a rollercoaster of highs and lows. The same patterns affected the annual crying towel meeting held on February 19th. Uncertainty convinced many in the club to choose Zoom instead of in person attendance but overall attendance was still quite high with a 50 / 50 mix of 36 club members and 5 guests. Many of the stories and photos have been posted on the website so you still have a chance to catch up with the best and the worst tales of the contest weekend.

In the end there can only be one. And this year the winner of the Crying Towel Award went to Andrea K2EZ/R.

The next meeting is our equally auspicious Home Brew contest where all of our contestants show off the project they have been working on all year.

For those who notice these things you will observe that the Prez Sez is much shorter than usual. That is due to the fact that I have been suffering with the flu this week and I have run out of steam and can't concentrate any more. I will endeavor to do better next month.

Phil NUF

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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".

February Meeting

The February meeting of the Pack Rats was not as well attended at the home site in Warminster as a few of the previous meetings have been. The remote attendance via Zoom was good especially the South Jersey Pizza Auxiliary.

This was the annual Crying Towel meeting where members can present tales of the problems they had that impeded their station's contest performance. This year's winner is Andrea K2EZ who regaled the club with problems she had on the rove including ruining her last roll of toilet paper and horrible driving conditions. She turned in a great score despite it all.

Drex, W3ICC, told the club about successes and problems with his rover. (See article in this edition of Cheese Bits.) Scott, AA2SD, a presentation about his rove that featured an AI generated female narrator.

The newest Pack Rat, Wayne, N3DRV, was voted into the club at the meeting and told how lack of duct tape diminished his efforts to operate at a remote site in the contests. Duct tape, never leave home without it.

The club's long time auctioneer, Elliot, W3JJZ, told how his son surprised him by getting a license and fixing up his station to operate the contest with him.

Phil, WA3NUF, presented business old and new.

Bruce, WA3YUE, spoke on preparations for the June contest. Operators are needed.

There was a well stocked Mario raffle table.

Tom KA3FQS

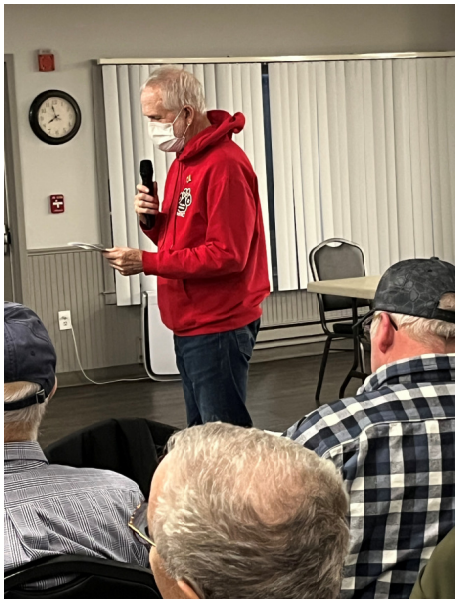
Some of the home site in Warminster attendees

Remote attendees via Zoom

February Meeting

Phil, WA3NUF, conducting the business meeting

Bruce, WA3YUE, talking about the June contest "We need operators"



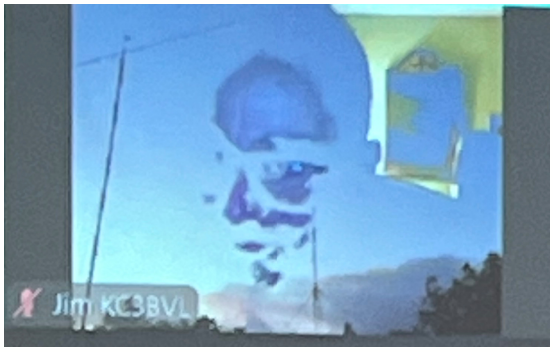
New member, Wayne, N3DRV, stating his case for the crying towel

Drex, W3ICC, talking about his roving adventure

Elliot, K3JJZ, talking about contesting with the help of his son

Some of the treasures on the Mario raffle table

More local attendees



Jim, KC3BVL, perhaps an homage to Man Ray

Annual Pack Rats Wrap Up Meeting Hosted by Bob W2SJ, and his Family In Mullica Hill NJ Grows Every Year

Bob W2SJ Kicks of the Contest Wrap Up Meeting in Mullica Hill NJ with Fellow Pack Rat Members

Saturday January 25th Mullica Hill NJ AA2SD -Every year after the “dust or snow settles” the Pack Rats come together to celebrate the conclusion of the January VHF Contest, and enjoy the camaraderie of a club as members have the opportunity to speak about their own individual contest experiences.

Graciously hosted by Bob W2SJ, Barb and his family, this fun event has become one the best attended club get-togethers. The food as always was sensational from our gracious hosts. In attendance were over 28 Pack Rats, and several Rats on the live Zoom session. We had members travel good distances including Stephanie WX3K from the Wind Gap, PA area, Roger W3SZ and Bill K3EGE from the Lancaster area in PA, and also several members from Delaware and MD.

Our esteemed Club President Phil WA3NUF was in attendance to help kick off the ceremonies with a recognition to all Pack Rats that participated in this year's Jan VHF Contest. Being face to face with fellow Club members is an enjoyable way to celebrate not only the Clubs Performance, but also to recognize the individual efforts of every Club Member that worked this contest.

Joe Taylor, was also in attendance at this Pack Rat Event, Joe, is an American astrophysicist, Nobel laureate (Physics, 1993), and Amateur Radio operator (K1JT) famous for discovering the first binary pulsar which provided evidence for gravitational waves. He developed the widely used FT8 (Franke-Taylor design, 8-FSK) digital mode for weak-signal, long-distance communication.

Members gather for some great home made food and collaboration as individual presenters review contest details.

Contest Results for the Pack Rats -This year the Club has achieved a new mile-stone with over 63 logs received for the January VHF Contest and a new high score of 1,760,407 points. Additionally this year was highlighted with Rover Activity

Detailed Summary Results can be found here
You can download or view a complete summary of the Pack Rat Jan Contest Score at the following link here. https://drive.google.com/file/d/111N6NvFyho8VtC-0OOViZfILB3lIbQtN/view?usp=sharing

Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club
January VHF Contest
Previous aggregate claimed scores

Year	#logs	Score
2026	61	1,760,407
2025	57	1,351,560
2024	57	1,330,662
2023	52	1,337,804
2022	59	1,370,915
2021	60	1,499,501
2020	70	1,260,661

“ The January contest is now officially in the books! Just waiting for the official results to be published. I look forward to this contest every year! Why? Because after the dust settles, the smoke clears and our bodies recover, we Packrats, as a contest group, get together for the “Wrap-up meeting”. Yesterday, Bob -W2SJ, his wife Barb and family, once again hosted this meeting. To me, this is the best part of the

January VHF Contest. To have nearly 70% of the Packrat contest participants gathered together to exchange stories and experiences was fantastic. The camaraderie was electric and the food was fantastic as well." **commented Joe KC2T**N

Al, W9KXI, and several other Pack Rats attended remotely to enjoy the festivities on a Zoom Session.

A Little more on Roving during the January Contest

PREPARATION FOR THE JANUARY CONTEST

Ray, N3RG offered W3ICC/R a portable 10GHz package in time for the January contest. It didn't take long for us to accept his offer. He worked extensively repairing and updating two 10 GHz DEMI transverters and assembled them with horns and accessories in what he referred to as the shoe-shine boxes. He provided us with one of his 10 GHz packages, and WA3YUE gave us a Yaesu FT817 all mode rig to use for the IF. W3GAD brought over a rig but we were concerned that we might hit the tranverter with too much transmit power, and we elected to use the 5W rig.

Paul brought over a heavy-duty tripod which worked out slick. For safe transport, the 10 GHz travels in the operating area of the rover. To make room for the operators, we set it up outside of the rover when we arrive at each site. A plastic sheet protects the unit from the elements, and a bungie cord keeps it from blowing off.

It seems that something always happens to delay the W3ICC rover departure the day of the contest. After making last minute repairs to the microwave package, Paul W2PED took time off from work Friday afternoon to reinstall it at the top of the rover mast. When the mast is fully lowered, the antennas block access to the top of the rover, so raising the mast a few feet is necessary to work on top of the rover. However, the mast would not raise. Troubleshooting the pneumatic system, all components appeared normal. Paul released some pressure and a bit of water from the air tank. After a long wait, the mast began to work normally. We assumed there was ice somewhere in the system due to the cold temperature, and we were concerned about a possible failure in the field.

The rover has a very loud alarm if the engine is started and the mast is not fully retracted. It is a welcome and important safety feature. The mast worked flawlessly.

Out of daylight, Paul reinstalled the package topside. Using the weak signal source, 1296 and 2304 were receiving normally. Air checking with WA2OMY while sitting in the home parking lot confirmed good operation of all bands. The operation of the 10 GHz rig was also very rewarding at that time.

Later that night I was required to move the rover away from my garage to make room for the snowplow to push the load of snow where I usually park. No longer having access to shore power the day before the contest, the charge on the battery that runs interior lights, inverter, monitors and rotor was compromised.

Saturday the snow tapered off about the time we met up with the other rovers in Lancaster at FN20AD. While the temperature was below freezing, the wind speed was low and we were reasonably comfortable.

Halfway through operation at the first grid, the low voltage alarm on the inverter indicated that the battery was low and we had to run the engine to keep the voltage up.

Sunday, in route to pick up Paul, I had just crossed the Delaware river when the mast alarm began to sound. I presume that the sensor does not like wet roads.

The alarm would not reset, so I continued to Paul's QTH where we began another troubleshooting effort. The Sonalert is buried somewhere behind the dash. We found an in-line fuse dangling below the dash. Fortunately, removing the fuse silenced the alarm.

Relieved that we had corrected the problem in a short period of time, we continued onto our next grid FM29KR and began to set up for operation. Everything powered up, but again, the mast would not rise. Returning the fuse to its holder restored normal, silent mast operation.

Activity was the highest at this location, and we wanted to continue operating but behind schedule, with extensive travel time to our next grid, we reluctantly shut down.

The blowing snow grew heavier and continued to increase in route to our next grid at FN30AJ. We were a long time off the air traveling to a school at the Highlands, north of Seabright.

Arriving, we unloaded the tripod with the 10 GHz package out into the snow and began setting up.

While connecting the feedline on top of the rover, Paul found the front half of the 222 antenna missing. He found it buried in the snow, laying on top of the rover. Fortunately, we did not lose it while driving. He reassembled it and then found hardware loose on the 1296 antenna. He tightened that and realigned the antenna. Can't do much reassembling with gloves on.

No sooner did we begin knocking out contacts at a good clip, but a snowplow arrived to clear the parking lot. Since the driver chose to plow around us, we kept operating. After two and a half hours operating at what is normally a good site, the late hour and transmitting through snow covered trees compromised our QSO rate, and we reluctantly secured and traveled home.

The addition of 10 GHz, a new band for us, added to the excitement of the contest and resulted in one of the best January scores for us. We can't wait for the next adventure.

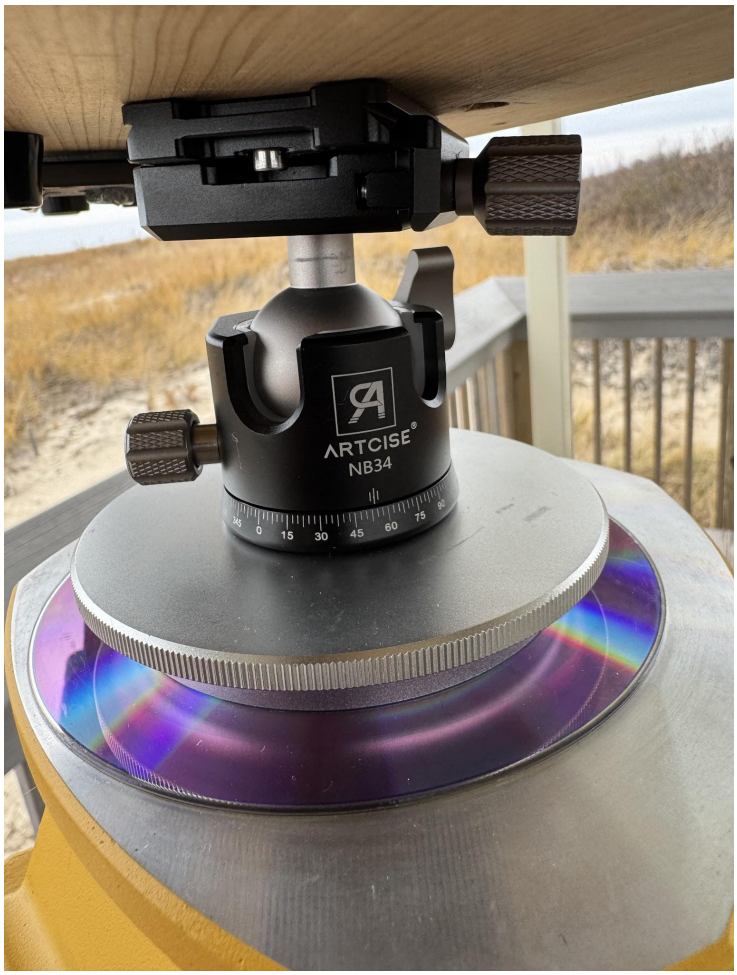
W3ICC and W2PED

Pack Rats K1RZ and AA2SD/R Complete a 10 GHz Microwave Test Across the Delaware Bay From FM28MX to FM19JH 121 miles

Scott AA2SD/R, points across the Delaware Bay Cape May Canal Entrance from the Southern NJ shore in New Jersey to Dave K1RZ on 10 GHz making a contact with the Horn

AA2SD/R Rover - Jan 2 2026 Cape May NJ FM28X - Friday Jan 1st I set up for an across the Delaware Bay shot to test my new 10 GHz Portable Horn set up in anticipation of the upcoming Jan VHF Contest. This is the first time I have tested Microwave from this new location located at the David Douglas Sr. Memorial Park in Cape May at the canal entrance.

The park set up is an ideal location at the very tip of the entrance for the Cape May Canal with a clear Southern shot, and a Northern shot up into the Pack Rack area in Philadelphia. The purpose of this test is to prove out the equipment and ease of set up with new surveyors tripod arrangements. The “shoe shine” box set up created by Ray N3RG was modified by adding a quick tripod disconnect plate to the bottom. I plan to use the same set up to aim from the top of my Subaru Outback. I also added a small fluid head locking tripod mount to stabilize the platform, and allow for aiming.



Setting up at the Cape May Canal Entrance with the new Tripod Test and Shoe Shine Rover Box Set UP

Equipment Used:

- Demi transvertor 1.8 Watts with Horn
- Basic surveyors tripod mounted with a fluid head and battery shelf
- Icom 705 IF rig with build in battery
- Magnetic keyer for CW and W3SZ.Com site for bearing estimates

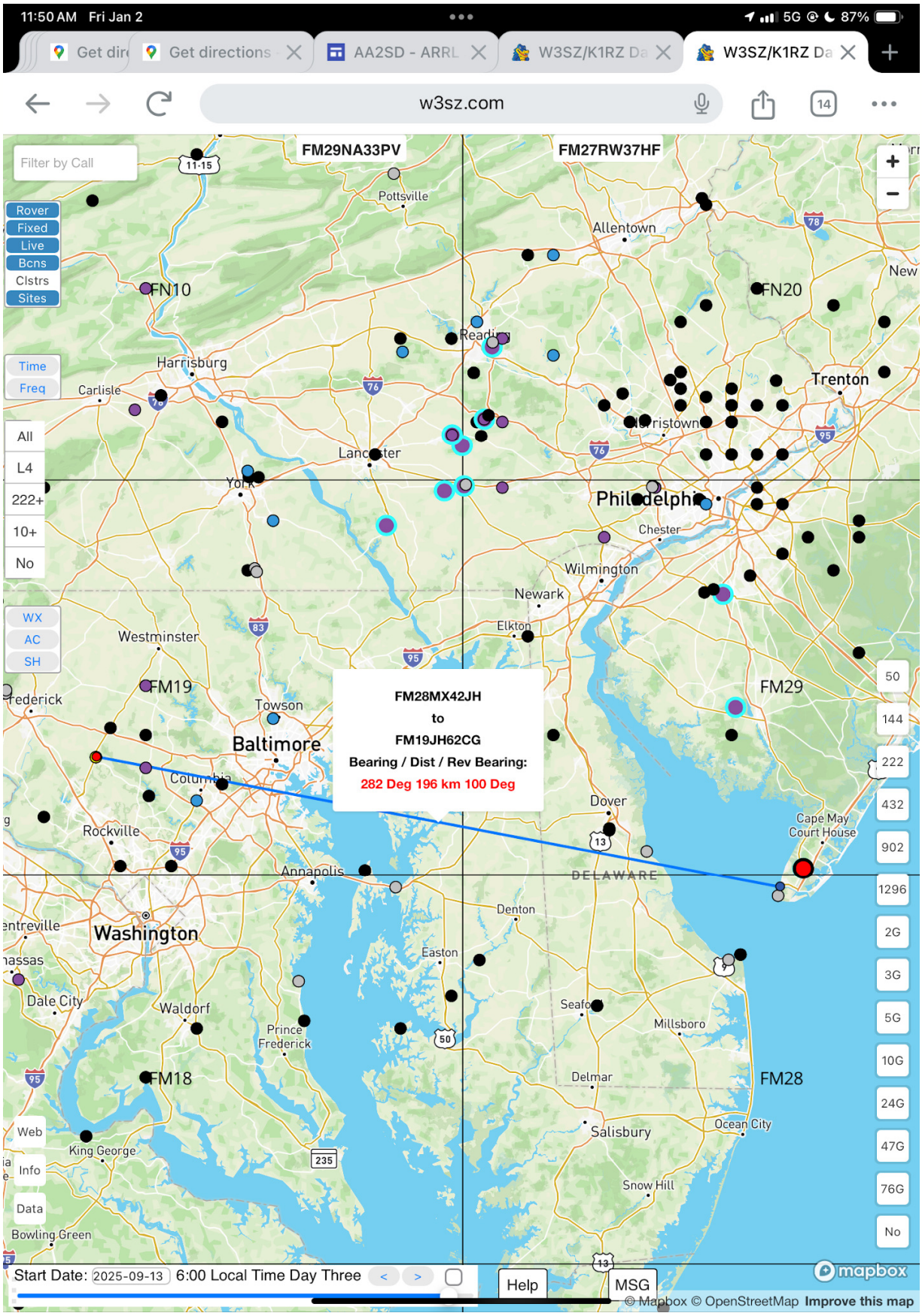
The Horn antenna configuration attaches to a simple mounting post on the roof rack of my Subaru Outback. Ray N3RG created the concept of building a shoe-shine box rover set up. My operating style is all mobile, and this configuration allows me to quickly set up the mobile station and use the top of my vehicle as a stabilization platform for aiming. The transition from car-roof top to the tripod, was a quick 5 minutes, with a simple battery hookup, while snapping the mount into place to the tripod head. To keep things simple the IF Radio is hung from the protective cage, with a safety strap to the tripod leg.

After a period of timing of aiming, and peaking antennas I was successful at making my first CW contact on 10 GHz with Dave at a distance of 196 km with the smaller horn antenna. Thanks to Dave and Ray for the support during this windy testing day in January.

Watch a quick video of antenna peaking on this fun day

YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQtj_3yp9MA



Retrofitting the digiLO PLL into older 10 GHz DEMI Transverters
by Steve Kerns, N3FTI

Down East Microwave recent announced that they have sold their 500th 10 Ghz transverter. Many of those older units are still in service using their original crystal based microLO or the later ApolLO 32 PLL board. The latest version of their 10 GHz transverter uses the new digiLO oscillator. The digiLO provides better phase noise along with an onboard 10 MHz precision oscillator. It also has the ability to detect and lock to an external 10 MHz reference such as a Rubidium standard or 10 MHz GPS output.

This paper describes the steps required to retrofit the new digiLO oscillator into older DEMI 10 GHz transverters.

The newest style DEMI 10 GHz transverter takes advantage of the fact that the digiLO can provide a base frequency of 3,408 MHz. That signal is tripled / filtered (3,408 MHz x 3 = 10.224 GHz) and used as the transverter's local oscillator. In earlier models utilizing the microLO or ApolLO 32 boards, the base frequency is 1,136 MHz that is tripled to 3,408 MHz followed by another tripler to take the output to the final local oscillator frequency of 10.224 GHz. By changing the program jumpers on the microLO it is capable of generating 1,136 MHz used by the older DEMI transverters, but performance will suffer greatly on both transmit and receive.

A much better solution is to modify the older style transverters to function properly when using the digiLO at a base frequency of 3,408 MHz. This involves simply bypassing the 1,136 MHz to 3,408 MHz tripler stages, replacing one resistor in the 3,408 to 10,224 multiplier stage along with the addition of a 10pf blocking capacitor at the input of U3.

The first step is to disassemble the transverter and physically replace the existing microLO or ApolLO 32 oscillator with the new digiLO. If desired you can add a Lock LED to the front of the transverter to indicate when the digiLO is locked to an external 10 MHz reference. Connect the digiLO to the same voltage source as the previous oscillator board (+9V). Verify that program jumpers 0,1,2,3,5,6.& 7 are installed on the new digiLO so it will output on 3,408 MHz. Do not connect the RF output at this time.

Remove chip resistor R6 (36 Ohms) on the transverter board and replace it with a
75 Ohm chip resistor. Also remove chip resistors R2 and R3 (both 82 Ohm) that provide DC power to the 1,136 to 3.408 tripler since we will no longer be utilizing that stage.

Next, using an x-acto knife cut the traces indicated in Figure 1 and install a microwave quality 10 pF chip cap as shown. This capacitor provides DC isolation between the transverter board and the digiLO output. Next, use a piece of miniature coax from the output of the digiLO to the input of the 10 pF capacitor that you just installed. Center conductor goes to the 10 pF chip capacitor and the shield goes to ground. After triple checking all your work, reassemble your transverter, being careful not to pinch any of the wires when installing the case. No tuning of the pipe cap filters is required after performing this retrofit.
If you have any questions or need clarification on this retrofit, please do hesitate to contact me. Hope to work you on 10GHz! 73 n3fti@yahoo.com

Figure 1 in on the following page.

Retrofittig the digiLO PLL into older 10GHz DEMI Transverters

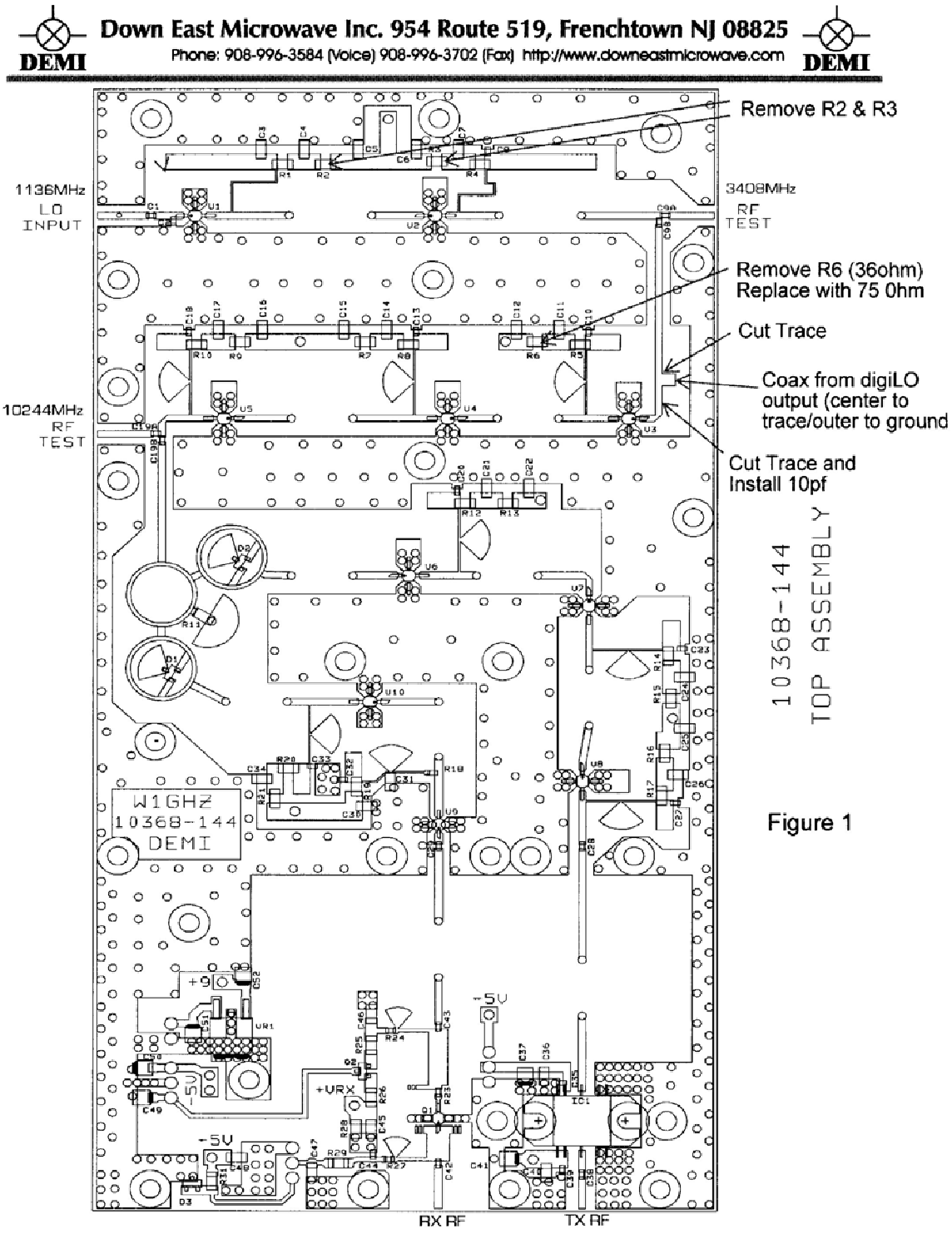


Figure 1

March Pack Rat Calendar 2026

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
					1
2 **Pack Rat Nets**	3 **222 Activity Night**	4 **KC3BVL 1296 Net** **2M FT8 Activity Night**	5	6 **KC3BVL Lower Four Nets**	7/8 Daylight Saving Starts
9 **Pack Rat Nets**	10 **222 Activity Night**	11 **KC3BVL 1296 Net** **222 FT8 Activity Night**	12 **BOD Meeting**	13 **KC3BVL Lower Four Nets**	14/15
16 **Pack Rat Nets** π Day	17 **222 Activity Night** St Patrick's Day	18 **KC3BVL 1296 Net** **432 FT8 Activity Night**	19 **Pack Rats General Club Meeting**	20 **KC3BVL Lower Four Nets**	21/22
23 **Pack Rat Nets**	24 **222 Activity Night**	25 **KC3BVL 1296 Net**	26	27 **KC3BVL Lower Four Nets**	28/29 **EME Conditions Very Good**
30 **Pack Rat Nets**	31 **222 Activity Night**	Apr 1 **KC3BVL 1296 Net** April Fools Day	Apr 2	Apr 3 **KC3BVL Lower Four Nets**	Apr 4/5 Easter Apr 5

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

Here is the cumulative monthly log for the 4 Bottom 4 Friday nets of February 2026

I may have missed a few.

If any of these calls don't look familiar, do yourself a favor and get on the air more often.

Jim KC3BVL

50.160	144.160	222.150	432.160
K3WWT	NN3C	W3JG	N3PUU
N9KIW	KE2DQA	KB2AYU	WA3EBS
N2SCJ	N2SCJ	WA3EBS	W3JG
WA3KFT	KB2AYU	N3PUU	KB2AYU
N3PKH	KA3FQS	KA3FQS	N2SCJ
WA3EBS	N3PKH	KC2SGV	N3PKH
KA3FQS	WA3KFT		KA3FQS
KC3PKV	N2QVY		KC2SGV
KC2SGV	KC2SGV		
N2LQH	KR1ST		
N2QVY	N3PUU		
KD2YTU	WA3EBS		
WA3DB			
W3UEC			

FT8 VHF / UHF / µW Activity Nights Come to North America

Looking for a new VHF UHF operating opportunity? Want to increase your grid counts on the higher bands? Looking for an activity to take advantage of your VHF and above equipment to make contacts without waiting for the next major contest? This may be your answer!

The FT8 Activity.eu monthly activity that has become very popular throughout Europe is being introduced in North America as FT8 Activity NA. The North American version will run the first three Wednesdays of each month from 8 PM to 10 PM local time. The activity band will alternate:

144 MHz calendar week 1
432 MHz calendar week 2
1296 MHz calendar week 3

While FT8 is the main operational mode, all digital modes available in WSJT are acceptable (using the frequency appropriate for each band).

This activity is open for general operating, but for those that need a competition to get motivated, posted log results for each Wednesday will be published along with the best aggregated results over 8 rounds. Final results will be published at year end. Complete rules are available at: https://ft8activity-na.net/

There have been discussions on the group.io pages about supporting this FT8 NA initiative. A few members of the North Texas Microwave Society are banging the drum looking for support for this new operating event. Participation will most likely be limited and slow until more people promote this activity on the air and within their local clubs.

Make some noise and see if you can stir up some contacts to get this operating activity off the ground. It has to be better than watching the talking heads on TV or NCIS Kalamazoo.

Forwarded by Phil WA3NUF

News from The ARRL Letter for February 26, 2026

Nominations for Section Managers in Eastern Pennsylvania and Pacific Sections will be re-solicited in the April 2026, issue of *QST* since no nominating petitions were received by the receipt deadline in early December of 2025.

Forwarded by Phil WA3NUF

New Version Release of VHFLOG

VHFLOG v4.77 is now available for download. The main change from the current v4.75 release is the addition of a new General VHF-UHF Activity log.

Prior released versions of VHFLOG only supported the major VHF / UHF / and µW contests sponsored by ARRL, CQWW, and the Sprints. General VHF and above operation logging was not specifically supported.

VHFLOG v4.77 includes a new logging option labeled “VHF-UHF Activity.” This option allows basic logging for Activity Nights, VHF SOTA / POTA, and any other event that does not require a scored output. The new option logs all QSOs entered, outputs the ADIF and imports QSOs real-time from WSJT-X.

V4.77 is available for immediate download at:
www.qsl.net/w3km/W3KM-VHFLOG-v4.77-update.exe
Additional information is available at:
https://qsl.net/w3km/VHF_HTML_Help/VHFLog-Help.html#hs20
www.qsl.net/w3km/v32revs.htm

FCC Requires That FRN Contact Information Be Updated Within Ten Days of a Change

February 2026 (The following article was originally published in the February 19th issue of the ARRL Letter.)

ARRL reports that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted changes to its rules to require that every holder of an FCC Registration Number (FRN) update their contact information in the CORES system (email and postal addresses) within ten business days of a change.

Because every FCC licensee—including amateur radio operators—must have an FRN to file applications, this requirement applies to all licensed amateurs. FRN contact information is handled separately and apart from contact information related to a license in the License Manager System. Both records must be kept up-to-date, and each requires a separate update.

Until now, no specific deadline existed for updating FRN or license contact information. Instead, the amateur rules at sections 97.21 and 97.23 provide that a license may be suspended or revoked “if FCC correspondence is returned as undeliverable because of an incorrect address/email.” These provisions remain in effect as well as the 10-day deadline applicable to FRN information.

If your FRN information is current and has not changed, no immediate action is required, but you must adhere to the 10-day rule for future changes. It is recommended to periodically check both the CORES and License Manager Systems to ensure contact information is accurate, even if no changes have occurred.

The new deadline [section 1.8002(b)(2) of the Commission’s Rules] became effective on February 5 as part of a proceeding that was limited to further constraining robocalls. Although the proceeding focused on robocall issues, the 10-day update requirement applies broadly to all FRN holders. On February 6 the FCC confirmed in a Public Notice that the new deadline applies to all FRN holders. The amendment replaces language adopted in 2001 that required FRN holders to keep their contact information up-to-date but had not imposed a deadline for doing so.

Numerous requests for clarification from non-robocaller interests led the FCC to issue a Public Notice on February 6 (see also PDF) clarifying that fines imposed on those subject to the robocall rules for not keeping contact information up to date do NOT apply to licensees such as radio amateurs, but that the 10-day deadline does apply to all FRN holders.

See the following resources for updating FRN and license information.

FCC Tutorial on updating FRN information: https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/html/Update_FRN_Information.htm

ARRL information on how to update license information: https://www.arrl.org/call-sign-renewals-or-changes

For assistance, call the FCC FRN Help Desk: (877) 480-3201 (available 8 AM to 6 PM ET)

FCC opens 900 MHz spectrum to modernize broadband networks for utilities

Randy Sukow February 19, 2026

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), during its monthly agenda meeting yesterday, opened up the full 10 MHz available in the 900 MHz spectrum band (896–901 and 935–940 MHz) for licensed broadband services, with a stated goal of replacing narrowband wireless applications for electric and other utilities and converting them to broadband networks for advanced communications applications.

"The 900 MHz band provides vital spectrum access for utilities critical infrastructure and other business enterprises that have begun deploying private LTE and 5G networks over the past six years," said FCC Commissioner Olivia Trusty during the meeting.

"These private broadband networks can enable smart metering, grid modernization, enhance security and resilience, and [more precisely deliver] essential electric, gas, and water services to all Americans."

Under the former rules, transmissions in the band were restricted to 5 MHz licenses, limiting the capability of private 5G and LTE networks. The unanimously adopted Report and Order allows licensees to open more wideband channels for a greater range of real-time smart applications to improve network efficiency. The 900 MHz band is also relatively low in the electromagnetic spectrum, allowing for propagation over wide areas.

Licensees will have three band configuration options:

- The legacy configuration of 20 wideband channels and 200 narrowband channels
- Two paired 3 MHz channels and two segments of the remaining 4 MHz to operate 159 narrowband channels
- The entire 10 MHz with two paired 5 MHz channels to deploy more broadband use cases

The transition to the new FCC rules will require some coordination with existing 900 MHz spectrum licensees to prevent interference. The order calls for "market-driven" negotiations between licensees on a county-by-county basis. However, incumbent licensees from the railroad industry expressed some concern over a negotiated transition in the order's comment phase.

"We give operators the flexibility they need to drive efficient transitions through private agreements. It's exactly the type of market-based approach that accelerates deployment and makes spectrum work for the American people," FCC Chairman Brendan Carr said. Carr noted that enhancing wireless capabilities is an important part of his larger Build America agenda.

In a statement, Rusty Williams, president and CEO of the Utilities Technology Council (UTC), praised the inclusion of market-driven transitions. "UTC also supports the Commission's decision to lift the freeze on the acceptance of applications for new or expanded 900 MHz narrowband operations, which will enable utilities and other critical infrastructure industries to increase the coverage or capacity of narrowband voice and data mission critical communications systems."

https://www.telecompetitor.com/fcc-opens-900-mhz-spectrum-to-modernize-broadband-networks-for-utilities/

Southeastern VHF Society

2026 Annual Southeast VHF Society Conference

The 2026 SVHFS conference will be held on April 17th -19th in Macon Georgia. All interested in VHF and above Amateur operation are invited to attend. The conference will begin with our Thursday night social at a local establishment.

The technical conference begins Friday morning and will include a Luncheon with a guest speaker and continue Technical Presentations in the afternoon, with dinner out on the town, and continue with an evening flea market and hospitality suite. Saturday morning the technical presentations continue and conclude early afternoon when the antenna range and Rover display opens.

For our conference conclusion, we will have an in house banquet followed by our awards and door prize give away.

Event Address: Holiday Inn Macon North 3953 Riverplace Dr, Macon, Georgia, 31201

See https://svhfs.org/wp/2026-valdosta-ga/ for further details and registration information.

Conference registration & hotel room registration are on the SVHFS Conference website at: https://svhfs.org/wp/2026-valdosta-ga/

Conference registration payment options:

To pay use one of the following options after completing the pre-registration form:

Check payable to & mailed to Southeastern VHF Society, Inc. 2752 Monument Road, Jasper, GA 30143
PAYPAL / MASTERCARD / VISA. (http://bit.ly/3NP5Shj)
Pay at the conference

49th EASTERN VHF/UHF/MICROWAVE CONFERENCE

April 24-26, 2026
Hilton Garden Inn (860)-688-6400
555 Corporate Drive, Windsor, CT 06095
(I91 exit 38 to Day Hill Rd.)

DIRECTIONS & RESERVATIONS

The conference rate for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night is $149 per night. Three options with King beds are available.

We encourage everyone to register for the hotel as early as possible.
Book a hotel room at the conference rate with this link:

Hilton Garden Inn at Bradley Airport

The '*quick book*' option is for all 3 nights. Use the '*Edit Stay*' link (near the top of the page, on the right hand side) to change what nights you want to book.

The hotel address is 555 Corporate Drive, Windsor, CT 06095

Take I91 Exit 38, then go west to Day Hill Road.

A complementary shuttle is available from the Bradley Airport +1 860-688-6400

See website for up to date information https: //www.newsvhf.com/conference/

Microwave Update 2026

— SAVE THE DATE —

Friday October 23 – Saturday October 24

DoubleTree by Hilton – 1111 Jefferson Road, Rochester, NY 14623

Group Rate of $159 per night - Reservations currently being accepted

Call 1-800-774-1500 for hotel reservations

Group Code - RVHFG 2026 Microwave Update

Conference registration, events, and Thursday arrival details coming soon!

Check the website in February

www.MicrowaveUpdate.org

Questions? Email: MicrowaveUpdate2026@gmail.com

Editor's Notes

Tom KA3FQS

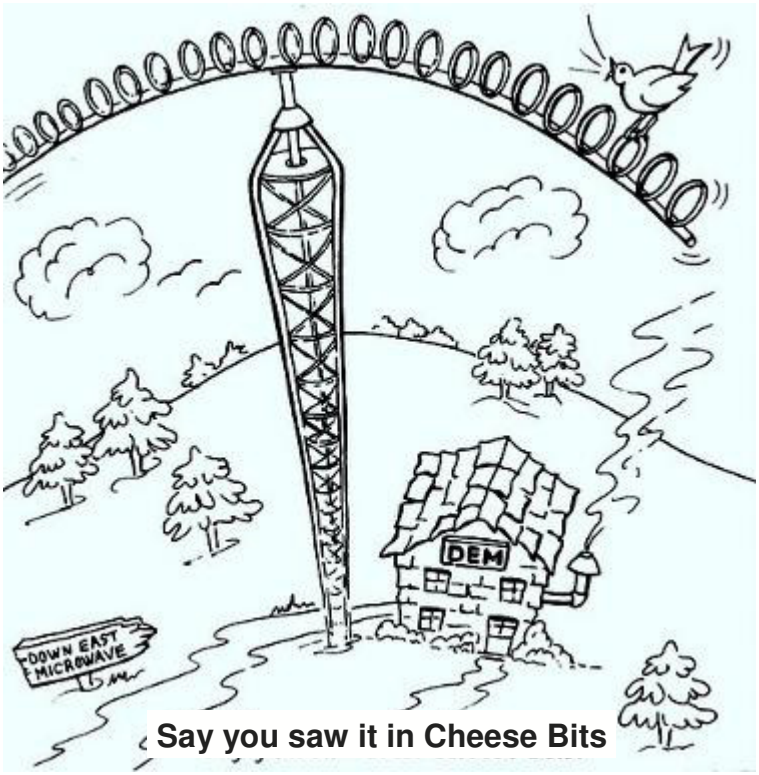
Once again I want to thank the contributors to this edition of Cheese Bits, without them there would be no Cheese Bits. There were a variety of subjects covered including contesting, equipment modification, experiments with 10 GHz, net participation, meeting summaries, a new version of VHFLOG, and regulatory changes. Thanks to all of the contributors for the hard work you did putting these articles together.

Again there were no postings for the Swap Shop so that feature doesn't appear in this issue.

Finally thanks to my proofreader, Melanie, for going through this issue and her assistant, Buster the cat, who is carefully watches each sheet of the galley copy coming out of the printer.

TO:

MT. AIRY VHF RADIO CLUB, INC.



Say you saw it in Cheese Bits