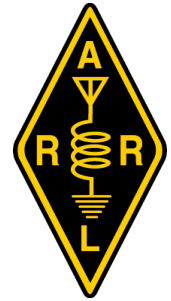




CHEESE BITS

W3CCX
CLUB MEMORIAL CALL

ARRL
Affiliated
Club



Volume LXIX

May 2026

Number 5

PREZ

May 2026

SEZ: The Pack Rats were well represented at the NEWS

Conference held in Windsor, CT the last weekend in April. A total of eleven club members attended and enjoyed the hospitality provided by our New England friends. There were a lot of stories and laughs, a number of excellent presentations and demonstrations, and plenty of side room mini flea market bartering taking place the entire weekend. Pictures of the event should be posted in the pages of this edition of Cheese Bits. If your schedule allows, you should make the effort to attend and experience this friendly and relaxed VHF event held each spring.

The conference papers are now available on the NEWS website along with the papers and presentations from past conferences. Check it out.

The April ARRL Night meeting was well attended with 43 members and local radio club guests on hand to meet CEO David Minster NA2AA, Atlantic Division Director Marty Newingham AG3I, and Field Services Director Josh Johnston KE5MHV. Approximately 20 club members attended the Meet the Speaker dinner prior to the meeting and had a great meal along with one-on-one conversations with our guest speakers. The actual club meeting was informative with David providing an update on topics the ARRL is actively working on or considering for the future.

Marty AG3I is filling the Director position in place of Bob Famiglio K3RF until new elections take place at the end of this year. The upcoming

elections are extremely important since the positions of Atlantic Division Director, Vice Director, and EPA Section Manager are all on the ballot.

I hope you have been enjoying the Spring Sprints the past few weeks. The sprints are a nice week night diversion allowing VHF operators to test their stations one band at a time in a short, relaxed contest format. You can check out the results and comments on each sprint by visiting www.3830scores.com

The Pack Rat sponsored Fall Sprints will kickoff in September. The dates and rules will be announced on the Packrat webpage and VHF reflectors in the next few weeks.

The May club meeting on 5/21 will feature a presentation by Kent Britian, WA5VJB on PCB antenna designs for the VHF and UHF bands. Ray N3RG has been working on a new stacked big wheel 902 Beacon antenna based on one of Kent's designs. Kent is a very engaging presenter so it should be an entertaining and instructive evening.

The June Contest is only a month away. The contest committee has been hard at work planning for the big event. Please contact Bruce WA3YUE or Nick N3YMS to sign up for setup, operating, or takedown activities during the upcoming June contest weekend.

CU on the Bands.
Phil WA3NUF

Packrats **CHEESE BITS** is published monthly by the **Mt. AIRY VHF RADIO CLUB, INC.** –Abington, PA.

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PACKRAT 222 MHz REPEATER - W3CCX/R

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WX3K Stephanie Koles 2 Year Director

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K1RZ David Petke 1 Year Director

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:

<u>TIME</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>NET CONTROL</u>
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.gth.net

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

Packrats-members@mailman.gth.net

See the W3CCX Web page for specific information on joining.

Packrats on Facebook

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

April Meeting ARRL Night

The April meeting was the annual ARRL Night. Several clubs in the area sent representatives.



Phil WA3NUF turned the meeting over to Phil K3TUF



Phil K3TUF acting as master of ceremonies



Bob W2SJ taking attendance



David Minster, ARRL CEO, talking about the state of the League.



Josh Johnston Field Services Director



Marty Newingham, Atlantic Division Director.

April Meeting



The ARRL officers taking questions from the audience



The audience for the Pack Rats ARRL night including members from other local clubs

Pack Rats Welcome The Spring with the Launch of the Central States VHF Society Sponsored Spring Sprints First Sprint



Someone should teach this "AI generated Rat" to go Horizontal instead of Vertical !



AA2SD/R Rover - April 13 th,2026 Microwave Activity - Sprint Rove

I started in FN20 located at an open Soccer Field Sports complex FN20NA , as this spot is a quick 30 min drive from QTH and in the open. My plan was to operate for 1 hour exactly at each location, and allow a 30 minute drive time to the second location. My second location in Voorhees NJ is Pole hill Park at 190 Ft located at the old Radar Site and always a favorite. The Sprints for me as a Rover are all about testing "quick set up" operating techniques and equipment. I allowed for no more than 10 minute set up time at each location using a quick set up beam, and a fiberglass push up pole.

Operating Stats:

- Shortened my total Operation time to 2.5 hours only
- Worked 6 Grids from the 2 Locations
- Total of 28 contacts all phone no FT8
- 14 Contacts at FM29 at Pole Hill Park 190 ft elevation using Halos Only
- 14 Contacts at FN20 with a combination of the small beam and Hallos
- Radio ICOM 705 with 70 Watt Amp
- Antennas
- Dual Stack Halos from FREQTESTER and a New Diamond 5 Element Beam



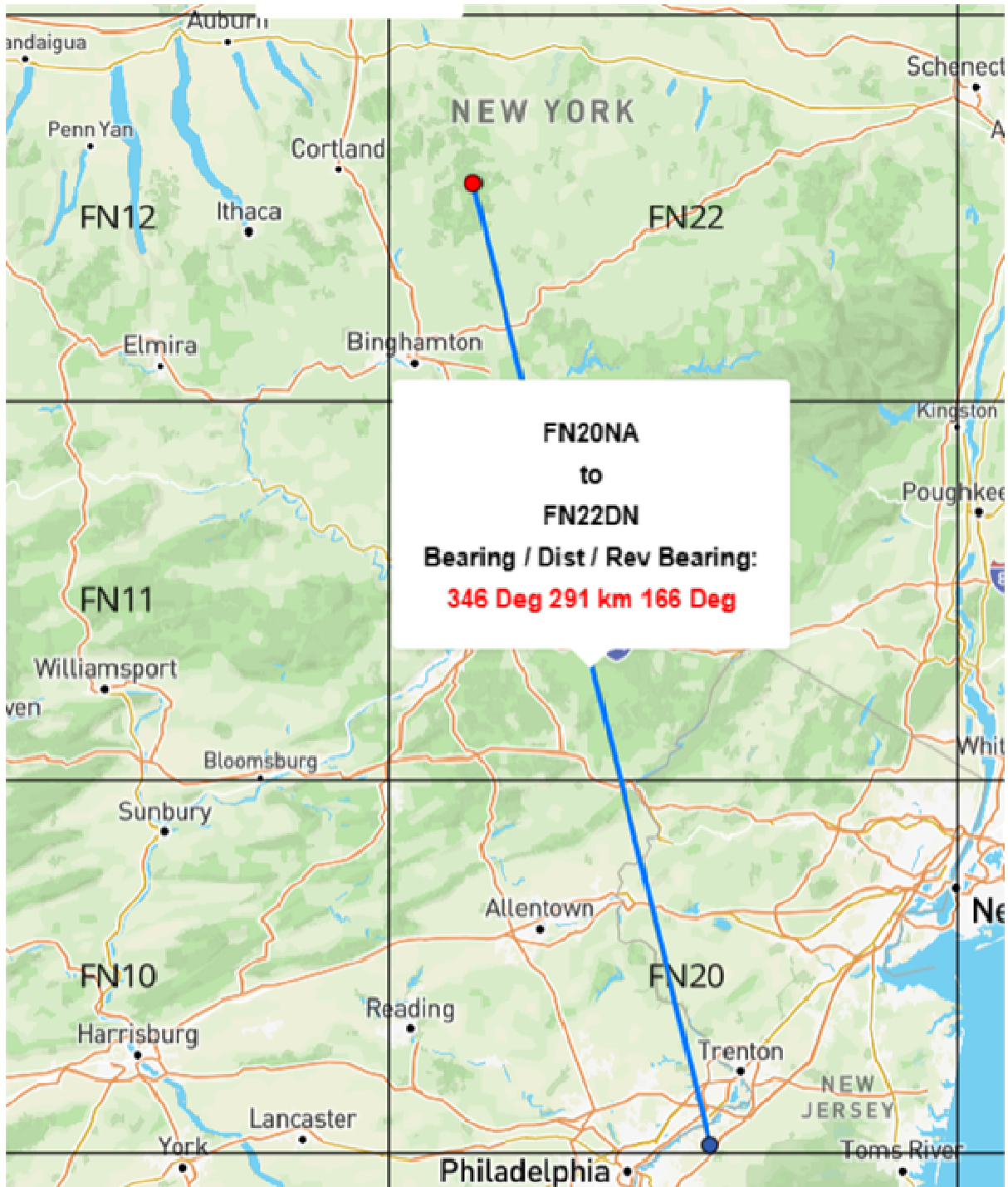
The propagation did get better during the evening after the sunset with the following notable contacts below as a Rover

Longest Distance Contacts below

- FN20 to FM 19 with **(Dave) K1RZ 216 km** -134 miles SSB 5 element small beam
- FN20 to FN12 with **(AI) W9KXI 293km -193** with CW with 5 element small beam

- FM29 to FM 19 with **(Dave) K1RZ 201 km**-124 miles SSB with Halo Antennas
- FM29 to FM19JH **(AI) W9KXI 309km -192** miles on SSB with Halo Antennas

- FN20 to FN22dn Rover to Hill Top with **(Lu) N2SLN** was **180 miles / 290 km.**



Contact with LU N2SLN FN20 to FN22dn Rover to Hill Top 180 miles / 290 km



Icom 705 with small Mirage AMP running 70 watts with a 5 watt drive from the IF Rig



Halo contact with ALI W9KXI from FM29MT to FN12NE located at 190 ft elevation Pole Hill Park

Thanks to the QSO's last night, the test of the featherweight Diamond 5 element Yagi and quick push up pole worked great. I will definitely add this to my toolbox for Roving. I was transmitting with 70 watts with the antenna up at 25 feet. The antenna folds down into a portable box, with wing nuts and only weighs 1.5 pounds. I worked with Ray Ed and Dave on Phone, and Al on CW. For my last stop I only used the dual stacked Halos and worked Dave and Al from the Pole Hill Park in Gibbsboro on SSB

The small beam fits my criteria for Roving, it's small, fits in the back of the Subaru and sets up in 5 Minutes with a fiberglass push up pole!



Pole Hill Park elevation 190 ft for my second stop of the Sprint

A144-S5 2 Meter Yagi Antenna

Specifications

Frequency:	144-148 MHz
Gain:	9.1 dBi
Power Rating:	100 Watts
Impedance:	50 Ohms (Nominal)
VSWR:	1.4:1 (Nominal)
Front To Back Ratio:	17 dB
Boom Length:	37.4" 950mm
Longest Element:	42.9" 1090mm
Driven Element diameter:	0.50" 12.7mm
Parasitic Elements diameter:	0.37" 9.4mm
Max. Mount diameter:	1.5"
Weight:	0.4 lbs. 0.81 kg

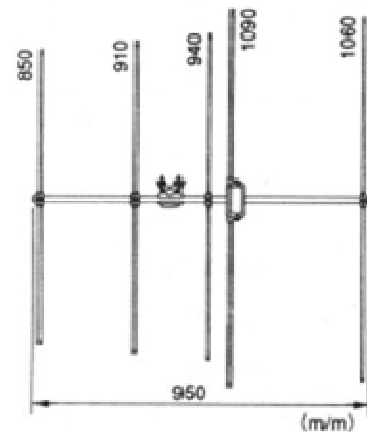
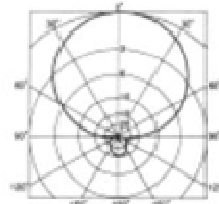


Figure 1

Sprints are great to check equipment for Roving!
See you in the next upcoming Sprints to test more equipment

Go Out and Play Radio
Scott AA2SD



144 MHz Monday April 13, 2026. 2300z (7pm EDT) to 0600z (11pm PDT) 144 MHz Monday April 13, 2026. 2300z (7pm EDT) to 0600z (11pm PDT)

222 MHz Tuesday April 21, 2026. 2300z (7pm EDT) to 0600z (11pm PDT) 222 MHz Tuesday April 21, 2026. 2300z (7pm EDT) to 0600z (11pm PDT)

432 MHz Wednesday April 29, 2026. 2300z (7pm EDT) to 0600z (11pm PDT) 432 MHz Wednesday April 29, 2026. 2300z (7pm EDT) to 0600z (11pm PDT)

Microwave (902 MHz and up) Saturday May 2, 2026. 0800 AM – 0200 PM Local Microwave (902 MHz and up) Saturday May 2, 2026. 0800 AM – 0200 PM Local

50 MHz Saturday May 9, 2026. 2300z through Sunday May 10, 2025. 0300z 50 MHz Saturday May 9, 2026. 2300z through Sunday May 10, 2025. 0300z

Pack Rats Attend the NEWS Conference



Dave K1WHS explaining where all of the Aurora's have gone



Pack Rats Socializing on the Patio with Dave K1WHS, RenA VE2UG, and Ron WZ1V



NEWS Group Raconteurs Dave K1WHS, Tom K1IM, Tom WA1MBA, Paul W1GHZ

As Phil mentioned in the Prez Sez section of this Cheese Bits eleven members of the Pack Rats attended the 49th EASTERN VHF/UHF/MICROWAVE CONFERENCE put on by the North East Weak Signal group. There was a day and a half of lectures and demonstrations from some of the most knowledgeable operators and builders in VHF and up. A few auctions were held between speakers for things of interest. There was a test lab set up by Rhode and Schwartz to measure equipment attendees brought or bought. Jim KC3BVL found out that his modified Quansheng HT only produces -10 dBm on 1296. There was also an indoor swap meet where I picked up a FT-817ND in the original box and an Agilent E4418B power meter and sensor. Saturday evening there was banquet with great food and great door prizes including a new Times Microwave connector installation tool kit. George and I picked up a couple of Larcam amplifier pallets for 432.

It was great fun hanging out with fellow club members and meeting NEWS members that I had worked.

I apologize for not taking more pictures but there was so much going on that held my attention I didn't get around to it. If you want to see more attend the Conference next year, I plan to.

Tom KA3FQS

The June Journey to Big Pocono

VHF/UHF Operators: We're coming for you! June 13-14, 2026.

It's the ham radio fantasy come true: Be the big voice from the mountain top that everyone can hear and everyone wants to contact.

For a few years, along with some really great Packrats, I have had the opportunity to be the voice of W3CCX during the ARRL's June VHF/UHF contest weekend. Believe me, it sure beats calling from my modest home station and being heard a fraction of the time. The Mount Airy VHF Radio Club's W3CCX contest station sits at a two-thousand-foot elevation atop Big Pocono State Park, above the Camelback ski resort, and just west of Stroudsburg PA. It has almost line of sight to the Philadelphia and New York metro areas.

Trying to portray the size and scope of the operation in words may not do it justice, but here we go. We will operate all modes on TEN bands, from six meters to 10 GHz, from the very top of the mountain with unobstructed views to the horizon in all directions. Four stations will be set up, each with low noise pre-amplifier, power amplifier, and directional beam (or dish) antenna. The first of the four stations will be dedicated to six meters, and the second to two meters. The third station will handle both 222 MHz and 432 MHz (1.25 meters and 70 cm). Our fourth station handles the remaining bands from 1296 MHz (23 cm) through 10 GHz. Each station has computer logging with WSJT-X integration for digital contacts. Starting Friday afternoon, four towers go up, and by Monday morning, like Brigadoon, it all disappears into the mist!

If there is a misconception to be dispelled, it's that operators need to have contesting or microwave experience. Not so! Our mission is to introduce all hams to the fun and wonders of the world above 50 MHz, which only a small percentage of hams explore. We are "preaching to the choir" here in Cheesebits, but think about your circle of ham radio friends: how many do you know who have never operated a super station, let alone a VHF/UHF super station during a contact weekend? It's a great excuse for a friendly road trip to a scenic mountaintop view, and a rare chance to see, and hopefully, operate that kind of setup. For those experiencing reluctance, operating new bands and modes under the guidance of experience sure beats the anxiety of the unknown.

Although I have been active in the January VHF/UHF contest for decades, the June contest always seemed to take a back seat to other summertime activities, including Field Day preparations (two weeks later). For reasons now lost to history, I finally made it to Big Pocono in 2021. At first, I watched, asked questions, and learned a lot. Gradually I slid into the chair and have not looked back. And the journey didn't stop at operating the W3CCX stations. During one fantastic visit to Big Pocono I had the chance to talk at length with Michael Davis KB3JEY (SK), then club President, and always a terrific friend to everyone he met. From those mountaintop discussions did my affiliation with this outstanding group solidify. So you never know where you're going next, but you have to start the journey – and bring a friend to start his/her journey!

Calling all Packrats: if you attend another club's meeting, or if you check into any ham radio nets, or if you visit a hamfest, or if you're in any other ham radio activity including POTA, please talk up the W3CCX June VHF/UHF super station at Big Pocono State Park June 13-14, and mention how all hams are welcome to visit and encouraged to grab the microphone!

73,
Jim W3JG

Visit us at
Big Pocono State Park
near Stroudsburg PA for:

June 13-14, 2026
ARRL June VHF
contest weekend

Guest operate the **W3CCX**
VHF-UHF-Microwave
Super Station!

or just visit to experience the
mountain top action at 2100 feet

Follow Camelback Road past the Camelback ski resort,
into the state park, and all the way to the end where
there is parking at the very top!



Mt. Airy VHF
Radio Club

packratvhf.com

Pack Rats Get Mention in the National Contest Journal

Jon Jones, N0JK/ n0jk@hotmail.com wrote the following about our club in the April/May 2026 National Contest Journal.

Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club
Encourages Innovation in
VHF Contests

The Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club is one of the premier VHF radio Clubs in North America. The Club was founded in 1956 by a group of Philadelphia-area hams whose main interests were building equipment and operating the amateur frequencies at 50 MHz and above. The founding members were almost immediately nicknamed the Pack Rats because of their propensity for collecting all manner of electronic equipment and parts. The nickname stuck, and for more than 60 years, the Pack Rats have grown and prospered.

The Pack Rats hosted a special activity period during the 2026 ARRL January VHF Contest-on Sunday afternoon, January 18, from 1900 to 2200 UTC, the club gathered on 2-meter SSB and looked for contacts to move up the bands. The announcement Noted:

The point of this activity period is to find stations with higher bands that you can run with then return to 2 meters to find another station. Call CQ! Move your antenna-club members are located from FM28 to FN12 and everywhere in between. Post on the ON4KST chat page. This is not an exclusive Pack Rat activity! All contest stations should take advantage of the activity and use 2-meter SSB to find and move stations to higher bands.

In order to provide an incentive to stay in the VHF game we will be hosting the Pack Rat Contest Bowl, a 3-hour period to find stations with multiple bands that will help raise your grid totals and final score. More efficient than sending endless unanswered CQs on FT8!

There are great resources for VHF ops on the Pack Rat club website (<https://packratvhf.com>), including how to set up WSJT-X for VHF contest station, digital modes for microwave and more.

May

Pack Rat Calendar

2026

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
				1 KC3BVL VHF Nets	2/3 902 & Up Spring Sprint Warminster Hamfest
4 Pack Rat Nets	5 222 Activity Night Cinco de Mayo	6 KC3BVL UHF Nets 2M FT8 Activity Night	7	8 KC3BVL VHF Nets	9/10 6M Spring Sprint Mothers Day May 10
11 Pack Rat Nets	12 222 Activity Night	13 KC3BVL UHF Nets 222 FT8 Activity Night	14 BOD Meeting	15 KC3BVL VHF Nets Dayton Hamfest	16/17
18 Pack Rat Nets	19 222 Activity Night	20 KC3BVL UHF Nets 432 FT8 Activity Night	21 Pack Rats General Club Meeting	22 KC3BVL VHF Nets	23/24
25 Pack Rat Nets	26 222 Activity Night	27 KC3BVL UHF Nets	28	29 KC3BVL VHF Nets	30/31
Memorial Day					
Jun 1 Pack Rat Nets	Jun 2 222 Activity Night	Jun 3 KC3BVL UHF Nets 2M FT8 Activity Night	Jun 4	Jun 5 KC3BVL VHF Nets	Jun 6/ Jun 7 Microwave Activity Day (Sat)

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.

Notice of Changes to the KC3BVL Nets

KC3BVL UHF Wednesday Net—Packrat, Jim KC3BVL conducts Wednesday night nets with schedule as follows: 7:30PM—903.100, 8:00PM—1296.100, 8:30PM— 432.150, 9:00PM 2304.100.

KC3BVL VHF Friday Net—Packrat, Jim KC3BVL conducts Friday night nets with schedule as follows: 7:30PM-144.160, 8:00PM-50.160, 8:30PM- 222.150. **No 432 net.**

KC3BVL SHF Saturday Net—Packrat, Jim KC3BVL conducts a Saturday morning net with schedule as follows: 7:00AM—5760.100

Upcoming Events

The Central States VHF Society is proud to sponsor the 2026 Spring Sprints!

Dates and times:

- 50 MHz Saturday May 9, 2026. 2300z through Sunday May 10, 2025, 0300z

For more information go to <https://sites.google.com/site/springvhfupsprints/home/2026-information>

EME Conference 2026

The 2026 EME Conference will be held May 28—31st in Tenerife, Canary Islands (Spain) hosted by Rainer EA8DMF.

EME 2026 Conference Web Site: <http://eme2026.moonbounce.info/eme2026.html>
You can pre-register by emailing him at EA8DMF@MOON-NET.EU

Please let Rainer know ASAP of your interest in attending as it helps with his negotiation and planning of the conference accommodations and activities.

432 and Above Newsletter

The 432 and Above Newsletter was created by AI K2UYH in 1971. Over the decades it provided a wealth of information regarding the activities of the EME community using frequencies 432 MHz / 70cm and above.

EME - Earth Moon Earth

Welcome to the new home of the 432 and Above Newsletter and other Amateur Radio EME (aka Moon Bounce) information.

This web site is in the process of being built out to provide as a repository for the current and past editions of the newsletter, as well as other related info including articles and EME conferences.

The web page and PDF version of the latest newsletter can be found here:

<https://eme.radio/432-and-above-newsletter>

Best 73
Barry VE4MA

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](mailto: MicrowaveUpdate2026@gmail.com)



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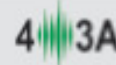
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Editor's Notes

Tom KA3FQS

It is hard for me to believe that it is May already. The month of April whizzed by with events such as the Pack Rats ARRL night, A few sprints, and the NEWS Group conference.

This month is also loaded with holidays and activities and hopefully warm weather. Enjoy!

I want to thank all of the contributors to this month's Cheese Bits. Scott contributed an article detailing his rove for the 2 meter Spring Sprint. Jim contributed a nice write up for the up coming June Contest for which the Pack Rats will set up a super station at Big Pocono State Park. Phil sent in the April/ May edition of the NCJ featuring a mention of our club's efforts in the January contest. Phil also provides the monthly Pack Rat Calendar. And finally to my wife Melanie who proofreads each edition of Cheese Bits.

Bob Fischer

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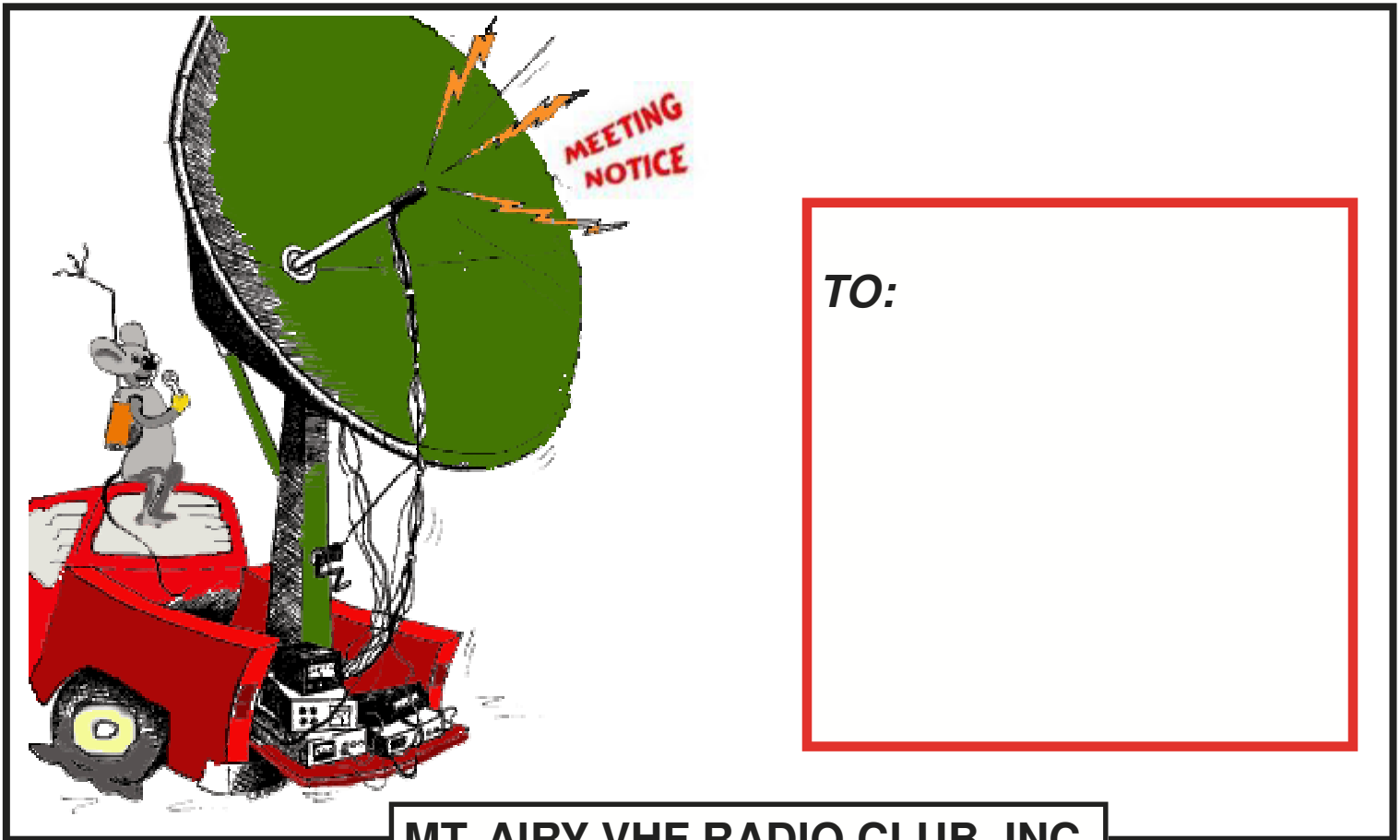
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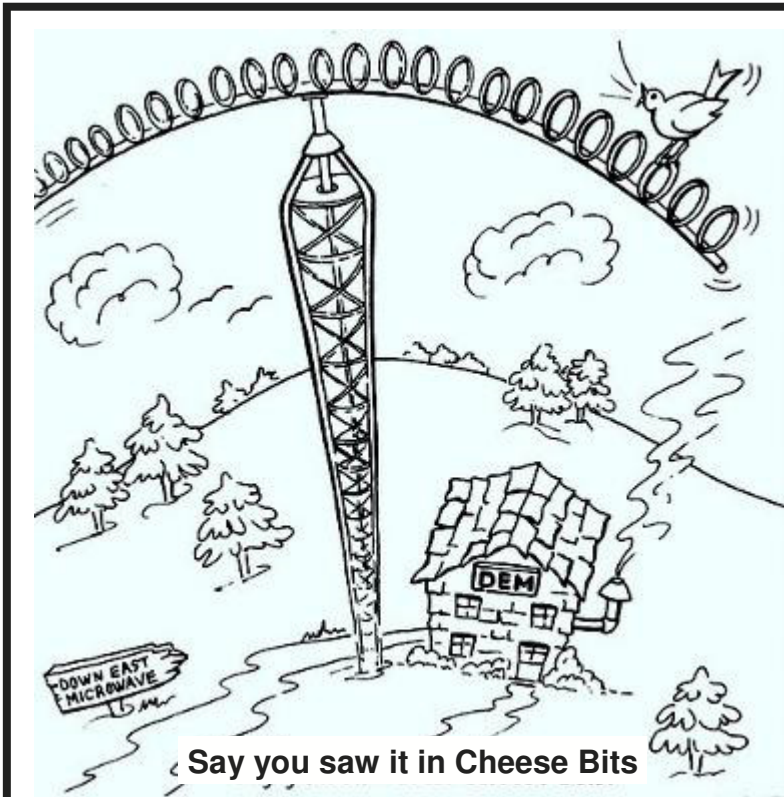
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