



# CHEESE BITS

**W3CCX**  
**CLUB MEMORIAL CALL**

ARRL  
Affiliated  
Club



**Volume XLVII**

**JANUARY 2006**

**Number 01**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I look back on 2005, it was a year of continued membership growth of the club, and success of our activities year-long. We won another gavel in the January VHF SS Unlimited Club category and had a tearful and mirthful Crying Towel session in February. There were some excellent and innovative projects for Homebrew Night in March and deserving recipients for April's Award Night. The recognition lunch for Ernie, W3KKN was well attended and a memorable one. Lots of 'rats were busy on the Spring & Fall sprints. Our June efforts on Camelback brought us a third place in the Multi-Unlimited category. Although we garnered almost 1 million points, there are areas that we can bolster, and we're making plans to address them. Our social events that followed—dinner and elections at the Brauhaus, the White Elephant sale at Gary's and the picnic at Al's were fun for all attendees and their families. Having the GFZ band at the picnic was a big added attraction, and returning with games for the families and kids was a plus. We increased our participation in the September VHF QSO party, and some of the members were active in the UHF contest and the 10GHz and up weekends. We had two ARRL speaker meetings in Oct & Nov that were equally stimulating and educational. I was left with the phrase from Nike ads: "Just do it!" Our December meeting is reserved for contesting info, and holiday cheer. My best personal wishes to you and yours for a happy, healthy holiday season and New Year.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary QSL cards have just arrived and are being distributed. The invitations for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner Dance on Sat. April 1, 2006 are being designed and readied for distribution. This club has a lot to be proud of in looking back on

50 years of technical accomplishments and contesting achievement, but most importantly, the camaraderie of sharing the VHF and fraternal experience. Although my Packrat history is a young 8 years, I have been scanning photos and letters from the Packrat archives in preparation for the 50<sup>th</sup>, and developing a sense of how the club was formed and operated for the past 5 decades with some verbal history from Ernie, Dick W3FQD, Bert K3IUUV, and Al K3EOD. The essence is that common experience is the basis for friendship. The more we share time with each other at meetings, social, construction and on-the-air activities, the closer we are drawn to each other, and the better we feel about our membership in a very special club.

As we approach our next 50 years, let us continue the process of reflection and direction. Looking back and seeing where we want to go as a group and as individuals. It is clear that the average age of a Packrat member has grown, and long term success is built on change, evolution and perpetuation of the best features of the VHF traditions that have been emphasized by the club and its members. Sometimes I picture the club as a modern-day company, with an administrative end, an HR section, an R&D group, a production team, quality management, and so on. Each of us has to play multiple roles, and all teams and sections need to operate in harmony for the best results and satisfaction. And much like the business cycle of products, we need to continue to try and introduce new products, build on successes, "milk the cash cows," and set-aside things that have reached the end of their usefulness.

Thank you all again for your generous contributions to the club's health and our member's satisfaction with your time, expertise, and care for each other. 73, Rick, K1DS

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**PACKRAT 222 MHz REPEATER - W3CCX/R**

222.98/224.58 MHz, Churchville, PA

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 Awards Chairman WA3GFZ 215-884-3116  
 QUARTERMASTER: K3IUUV, Bert Soltoff, soltoff@uscom.com

**PACKRAT BEACONS - W3CCX/B**

FM29jw Philadelphia, PA  
 50.080, 144.284, 222.065, 432.295, 903.071, 1296.251,  
 2304.037, 3456.220, 5763.190, 10,368.140 MHz (as of 3/1/01)

**MONDAY NIGHT NETS**

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

& go to 3.4G & up after

Visit the Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club at:

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

## Editor's Column

WOW! The holidays certainly have a way of eating up you time.. Yes sir, time sure flies when you are having fun.

As you can see we have a rather light edition this month. Plenty has been happening but the offerings have been few for filling an even number of pages for **Cheese-Bits**. It's up to everyone of you to put your thoughts down on paper and get at least a rough copy to me for submission to your newsletter.

The W3GAD station is solidly on the air with 5 bands. The installation of the new transverter interface and switching system provides a much needed improvement in receive performance on 903 and above. By the end of this week we will have 7 bands on the air. I spent a little time on the tower re-aiming the antennas, now the beacon heading is as predicted by the W3KM Logging program. There is still a little work to be done to have the N3FTI auto band selection module fully functional but that should also be in place with enough time for a good shakedown before the contest.

We are hearing excellent reports from our Multi-op stations about improvements. If you can not operate from home why not lend a hand at one of these stations. It is very rewarding knowing you have had a part in helping the club and your host be successful.

The PACKRATS have a full set of activities between now and the end of June.

Mark your calendars for the 50th anniversary calibration on 1 April. Your celebration committee has been hard at work planning a fun filled, meaningful and affordable evening for you and your significant other so plan to attend and get your reservations in early. Look for the invitation coming to your mailbox soon.

The QSO PARTY/CONTEST in June is also a lot closer than you ever imagined with only a few short months to finalize plans and get all the improvements in equipment organized, staffing and operating schedule in place and rovers equipped and test—how can you help?

There are several excellent conferences and plenty of Sprints to help fill your Spring evenings. Check the activities calendar on page 6.

WA1ZMS and other have been very busy expanding the horizons for us with successful efforts on 137 GHz earning a VUCC award and extending the mileage records on 24 and 48GHz. It is quite amazing in how they manage to get rigs on the air at these wavelengths. Congratulations.

'Nuf rambling for now.

Listen for the WEAK ONES

73

W3GAD Doc



The time  
is  
getting  
closer  
are you ready for the January  
contest?

Like many, I have been busy readying my station for the contest. Some of the improvements are the addition of legal limit amps for 6 & 2 meters, a new logging computer, and hardware to operate WSJT modes on all bands through 10GHz. What projects do you need to finish before the contest? Don't wait until the day before the contest, **now is the time to complete you station upgrades!** By now you should have received the 2006 January Contest Package. If you have not received it via email, it can be downloaded from my website; [www.pennbiomed.com/n3fti.htm](http://www.pennbiomed.com/n3fti.htm). A condensed version is available for those of you who are still using a dial-up connection.

As last year, Bill K3EGE will be compiling a list of rovers than will operate the contest. His list includes tentative times, grids, and modes that each rover plans to operate. Look for this to be sent out in early January.

I was reminded by Rick, K1DS that there are many in the club who use LASER for extra grids and points. Like WSJT this band can offer many points if you are willing to schedule contacts and spend the time driving from QTH to QTH. Many of those who have LASER are listed on the club check off sheet, but many are not. Please let others know if you will entertain LASER contacts during the contest. This can be done by email posts to the Packrat Email List or by contacting others that have LASER systems. Mother Nature prevented many from attending last months meeting but be sure to attend this months meeting where we can finalize our plans for a record setting victory in January.

73

Steve Kerns, N3FTI

# 2006 ARRL JANUARY VHF SWEEPSTAKES Team Captains

**Contest Chair:**

*Steve Kerns, N3FTI.*

**Honorary Chair:**

*Bill Lentz, AA2UK*

**Norristown:** *Gary Hitchner, WA2OMY & Joe Keer, W3KJ*

WA3YUE, KB3XG, WN3A, KA3MGB

**Ottsville:** *Dave Mascaro, W3KM*

KU3A, W3GXB, W3HMU, N3ITT

**Blue Bell:** *Rick Rosen, K1DS*

WA3AQA, NE3I, K3LOM, K3VEQ, N1XKT,  
W3RZU, AA3RE

**West:** *Phil Theis, K3TUF*

N3NGE, K3IB, W3DFM, N3FTI, W3SZ, KF3DO,  
W3FEY, K3BPP

**SNJ:** *Bob Fischer, W2SJ*

N2DEQ, K3EOD, AA2UK, WB2RVX, WB2RXM,  
W2SB, KC2JPN

**NNJ:** *Joe Taylor, K1JT*

WC2K, N2SB, WB2ONA, W2PED, WB2VLA,  
K2TXB, N4HY, N2CG

**Newtown/Southampton:**

*Ed Finn, WA3DRC*

*Bert Soltoff, K3IUV*

W3GAD, W3ICC, K3MFI, W3RJW

**Hilltown:** *Chris Getman, N3PLM*

AA3GN, K3ESJ, WA3NFV, KA3WXV, K3IB,  
N3GSA

**Warminster:** *Phil Miguelez, WA3NUF*

N3AOG, W2SK, W3FQD, N3OZO, K3EBZ,  
KB3GJT, KA3FQS

**South:** *Ben Kelsall, WA3RLT*

KB3BBR, K3EGE, W3EFH, WA3U, K3JJZ

**Glenside:** *Paul Sokoloff, WA3GFZ*

K3DMA, WA3EHD, N3EVV, W3KKN, KB3HCL,  
WA3NAY, W3SYN

**Other:** *Steve Simons, KF6AJ*

WA3BZT, W3OR

If you can not find yourself on this list please contact N3FTI so you will be included in the appropriate team.



# Silver Plating

By Mike, WB8GXB

I was making a pipe-cap cavity for 1296-MHz using copper water pipe fittings and hobby brass. Documentation on cavities states that for best results the cavity should be silver-plated. I intended to make a few of these and maybe for other bands as well. I wanted to silver plate mine if possible. I found a simple system from Caswell Plating to accomplish the task. They have some expensive systems but they also have a product called "Plug-N-Plate". This process consists of a wall transformer (1.7-volts for silver), a plating wand, gauze to hold the plating solution, and 4-oz of plating solution. The process is done as follows: 1. wrap the gauze around the wand, 2. plug in the transformer and connect one side to the part being plated (alligator clip) and the other side (banana jack) to the wand, 3. soak the gauze in plating solution, 4. brush the gauze wand on the part being plated. A plated finish will result. Coat the entire surface refreshing the gauze with solution as needed. Buff finish as desired. That is all there is to it. The plating coated the copper and brass evenly. The part must be cleaned with a copper/brass cleaner for best results. Failure to do so may prevent any plating. The company also provides kits for other plating like nickel, tin, gold, etc. The silver kit costs \$38.00. 4-oz solution will plate a large area assuming it does not get contaminated. Never place the gauze-coated wand directly into the bottle. Always pour a little into a small cup and never pour that back into the bottle. Some silver plate solutions contain cyanide but this product does not. The silver solution is not considered hazardous so it does not require any hazardous shipping fees or restrictions. MSDS health rating is 1(low) for the silver solution but I would wear protective gloves. It will stain your cloths if you get any on you, as I found out. I also had to re-attach the alligator clip and banana jack. They had a very light crimp and into insulation as well. This URL takes you directly to the Plug-n-Plate page:

<http://www.caswellplating.com/kits/plugnplate.htm>

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## BEACONS

### ON THE AIR IN FM18ew

Hey Fellow Microwavers: (Not certain this has been published.)

K6LEW/B has been in operation from North Mountain, WV for over a month;

DMS: 39 - 05 - 29 N , 78 - 30 12.85 W

Deg Dec: 39.09425 / -78.50357

Min Dec: 38 - 5.655 / -78 - 30.2142

UTM: Zone 17, Easting (meters): 71589,

Northing (meters): 4330202

Beacon frequency / power out / antenna type / approximate gain:

2304.215 MHz / 10 watts / WG Slot / 21 dBi

3456.215 MHz / 5 watts / WG Slot / 24.6 dBi

5760.210 MHz / 5 watts / WG Slot / 28.1 dBi

10,368.218 MHz / 5 watts / WG Slot / 32.3 dBi

Early in 2006 the call sign will be changed to K3UO/B.

73, Chuck Watts, W4XP; FM18ew -- 1.8 thru 10368 MHz

Delmarva VHF and Microwave Society, K8GP

Grid Pirates Contest Group; <http://k8gp.net>

Potomac Valley Radio Club; <http://www.pvrc.org>

Ole Virginia Hams; <http://www.w4ovh.org>

### LOOKING FOR A GOOD TIME or REASON TO BE ON THE AIR?

*Check out some of these other nets:*

Day	Time	Frequency	Call/location
Tuesday	20:00	50.250	K4IRT Lexington, SC
	22:00	222.150	K8TQK. EM89je
Weds	21:00	50.150	Wheeling WV
Thursday	20:00	50.200	KJ4RB Pink Hill NC
Friday	21:00	50.400	W4KCS Lynchburg, VA
Saturday	08:00	50.200	KD4MYE Wake Forest NC
	20:00	50.213	Charleston. SC
	21:00	53.010	Lexington, VA
Sunday	2100	222.111	K8GUN FM09xh

## NE3I

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# WHATS HAPPENING

## A LISTING OF INTERESTING EVENTS

**7 JANUARY 2006—W3IY MICROWAVE ACTIVITIES DAY** - 0800 to 1200 local time start on 144.200 and move up the bands—test your gear and try some DX

**9, 16, 23, 30 JANUARY 2006**—Check into those *MONDAY NIGHT NETS* starting at 7:30 Pm on 6 meters and moving up the bands every half hour. This is also PART II of MAD from 7 PM to Midnight so there should be plenty of stations on the air to help you check your equipment out before the contest.

**12 JANUARY 2006—PACKRATS BOARD of DIRECTORS** Meeting at the QTH of Brian Taylor, N3EXA, 1634 N. 5th Street, Perkasio, PA

**19 JANUARY 2006—Regular meeting of the Mount Airy VHF Radio Club.** Ben, WA3RLT will be giving his superb analysis of the 2005 logs. This is the meeting where you pick up those valuable tips on the MUST BE ON THE AIR Strategies. Rover schedules will be available. Rover schedules are, of course, subject to the whims of Mother Nature.

**21-23 JANUARY 2006—JANUARY VHF SWEEPSTAKES**—Get working now to finish your improvements. Get on the air to test your equipment while there is plenty of time to get the help you need. Take advantage of the MICROWAVE ACTIVITIES DAYS too!!

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

**4 FEBRUARY 2006—PACKRATS CONTEST WRAP-UP** at the QTH of KB3XG. This is also a Planning Session for June 2006 Contest expedition.

**9 FEBRUARY 2006—PACKRATS BOARD of DIRECTORS** Meeting

**16 FEBRUARY 2006—Regular meeting of the Mount Airy VHF Radio Club.** This is the annual CRYING TOWEL Evening. Come for the laughs, come for the tears and come to the hear of the success of the PACKRATS.

**1 APRIL 2006—Celebration of the PACKRATS 50th Anniversary.** Williamson Restaurant and Conference Center, Horsham, PA just north of exit 343 of the Pennsylvania Turnpike

**22-23 APRIL 2006— Annual VHF CONFERENCE** Sponsored by the N.E.W.S. Group, Enfield CT

All meetings are announced on the regular Monday Evening Nets. (See Page 2)  
Board meetings of the Mount Airy VHF Radio Club are open to all members. Teleconferencing for members is usually available.

Regularly scheduled meetings of the PACKRATS are held in the basement meeting room at the Southampton Public Library on Street Road in Southampton, PA. Meetings are open, not only to the membership, but to any party interested in VHF/UHF/ Microwave contesting, equipment design and construction for use on the VHF/UHF and Microwave Frequencies or amateur radio in general.

*Call for Papers*  
*10th Annual Southeastern*  
*VHF Society Conference*  
*April 28th and 29th, 2006*  
*Greenville, South Carolina*

The Southeastern VHF Society is calling for the submission of papers and presentations for the upcoming 10th Annual Southeastern VHF Society Conference to be held in Greenville, South Carolina on April 28th and 29th, 2006. Papers and presentations are solicited on both the technical and operational aspects of VHF, UHF and Microwave weak signal amateur radio.

Some suggested areas of interest are:

Transmitters, Receivers, Transverters, RF Power Amplifiers, RF Low Noise Pre-Amplifiers, Antennas, Construction Projects, Test Equipment And Station Accessories, Station Design And Construction, Contesting, Roving, DXpeditions, EME, Propagation (Sporadic E, Meteor Scatter, Troposphere Ducting), Digital Modes (WSJT, etc.), Digital Signal Processing (DSP), Software Defined Radio (SDR), Amateur Satellites, Amateur Television.

In general papers and presentations on non weak signal related topics such as FM repeaters and packet will not be accepted but exceptions may be made if the topic is related to weak signal. For example, a paper or presentation on the use of APRS to track rovers during contests would be considered.

The deadline for the submission of papers and presentations is March 3, 2006. Papers and presentations will be published in bound proceedings by the ARRL. Send all questions, comments and submissions to the technical program chair, Jim Worsham, W4KXY at [w4kxy@bellsouth.net](mailto:w4kxy@bellsouth.net).

*Call for Papers*

*New England Weak Signal Group*  
*2006 EASTERN VHF/UHF CONFERENCE*  
*21 to 23 April 2006*

The conference will be held in Enfield, CT. This is the first major vhf+ conference event of the year so please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

We are looking for submission of papers and presentations for the upcoming 32nd annual conference and also people to help out again.

Please contact Bruce Wood, N2LIV conference chairman at:

[bdwood@erols.com](mailto:bdwood@erols.com)  
or (631) 265-1015 (h).  
(516) 938-6938 ext 210 (w).

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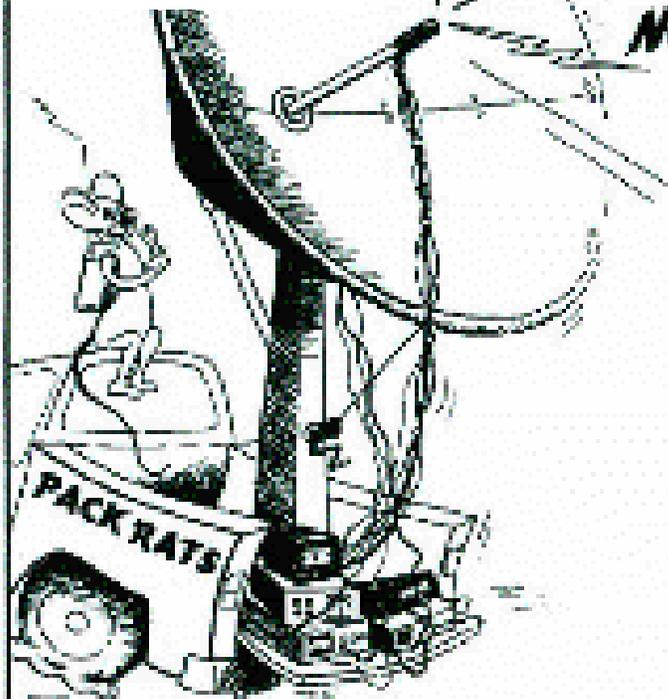
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# MEETING NOTICE

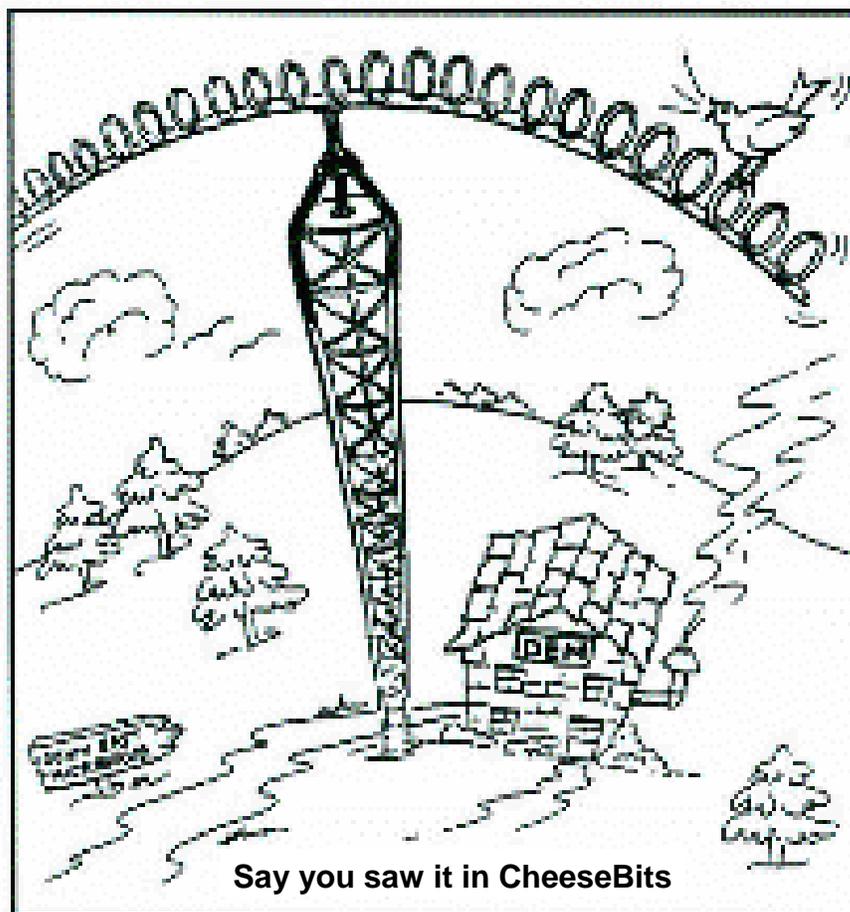


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INSIDE:

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