



CHEESE BITS

W3CCX
CLUB MEMORIAL CALL

ARRL
Affiliated
Club



Volume LIV

March 2013

Number 3

PREZ
SEZ:

We've had our opportunity to rejoice and to cry over the results of the January VHF Contest (congratulations have to go to Joe Fisher for earning the coveted Crying Towel at the last meeting).

Now it's time to move on to the next event. We are being teased by the weather with many days being acceptable for antenna work. I spent time with a new 5 element 15 meter beam on the test stand getting it ready for its place at 70 feet on the tic ring where a tribander once performed. So much for the weather. We are finally into March where the equinox will occur; a sure sign of more comfortable temperatures. It was too bad that the new beam couldn't find its place for the contest on the first weekend of the month. The ARRL SSB DX Contest is a great 48 hour opportunity to see what stations you can work on the HF bands. This contest is NA against the world, making it easier to work the DX stations. If you have shunned my appeals to improve your CW score by getting on for an HF CW contest, this is an SSB contest, so **there is no excuse :-)**

The next event socially is Ladies Night; it's a great opportunity to spend some time with your spouse in a relaxed, entertaining atmosphere. The last two years have been a real treat for all who attended. Sign up at the packratvhf.com

website. We'd love to see you there.

The next event radio-wise is the June VHF Contest. This is a **major event for the club** where we take a full suite of equipment for 10 bands, towers and all, to one of the highest locations in PA and operate for the full 33 hours of the contest. Every one who has participated has thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We take a full galley of food; there is plenty of room to camp, or you can stay at one of the local hotels if you are so inclined. This year will prove to be another great event; we have a full complement of band captains ready to bring top notch equipment to the mountain. **If you normally operate from a place where you just get by with the competition**, this is an opportunity to work from a top flight, high tech station; see what it's like! We set up on Friday, contest Saturday and Sunday then tear down on Monday morning. We're, usually out of there between 10 and noon. If you can't make all four days, come for 3, 2 or 1 and enjoy the fun. We need many hands to make the load light. You won't regret the time you put into this weekend; June 7 to 10.

While I'm asking you to go places, let me remind you that the N.E.W.S. Conference is April 26 to 28 this year and as I mentioned last month, I'm taking AMTRAK to Union Place in Hartford CT, just ten minutes from the Conference. It's an easy ride, avoiding all of the traffic. Join me at 30th Street Station.

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

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222.98/224.58 MHz (PL 136.5) Hilltown, PA

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PACKRAT BEACONS - W3CCX/B

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

MONDAY NIGHT NETS

<u>TIME</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>NET CONTROL</u>
7:30 PM	50.145 MHz	K3EOD FM29ll WA3QPX FM29di
8:00 PM	144.150 MHz	N3ITT FN20kl
8:30 PM	222.125 MHz	KB1JEY FN20je
8:30 PM	224.58R MHz	W3GXB FN20jm
9:00 PM	432.110 MHz	WB2RVX FM29mt
9:30 PM	1296.100 MHz	K3TUF FN10we
10:00 PM	903.100 MHz	WA3SRU FN20le

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

On to Constitutional Objective (5); our last discussion in this series is: "To promote an interchange of ideas and technical information between members and to assist each other in the design, construction, and adjustment of radio equipment", a practice and tradition that has been a part of the Packrats since inception.



Today the interchange occurs on our email list. Make sure you are subscribed to that list. I know there is an abundance of assistance that goes on and most years there is an award given to the latest member who exhibits that characteristic.

Many times when equipment is available we get involved in projects that enhance many stations in the club. I know that this rich heritage will continue as long as the club exists.

Another event on the short list is the Spring series of Sprints. 144, 222 and 432 will happen on April 1, 16 and 24 all starting at 7 pm local time. Be sure your station is ready for that event, it's a four hour event that is fun to experience.

Lets work on lots of bands,

Phil K3TUF

Nr	Call	QSOs	Grids	Score	6M	2M	222	432	902/3	1.3 GHz	2.3 GHz	3.4 GHz	5.6 GHz	10 GHz	24 GHz	La-ser
36	AA3JH	208	17	4437	100 9	55 4	17 1	36 3								
37	KB3XG	119	25	4075	35 6	40 10	9 2	35 7								
38	KA3WXV	149	19	3819	45 6	52 5	19 3	33 5								
39	K3VEQ	139	22	3630	52 10	61 10		26 2								
40	K3IUU	153	17	3553	32 3	65 7	26 4	30 3								
41	W3FEY	61	21	2352	14 5	12 4	17 4	10 4		8 4						
42	KB3MTW	141	10	1960	43 4	43 3	25 1	30 2								
43	N3PLM	84	15	1920	34 5	22 4	11 2	9 2	6 1	2 1						
44	N3FTI	70	19	1862	19 4	23 5	13 5	15 5								
45	KB3GJT	103	12	1296	35 3	63 7		5 2								
46	W3RJW	28	11	1276	2 1	4 2	3 1	4 1	3 1	3 1	3 1	2 1	2 1	2 1		
47	W3GXB	64	12	828	41 7	18 4	5 1									
48	WB2VLA	47	11	638	18 4	18 5	6 1	5 1								
49	K1DS	44	10	600	10 2	18 4	5 1	11 3								
50	W3VVP	24	13	559	4 2	13 6	1 1	2 1	1 1	2 1	1 1					
51	WA2DTW	37	9	441	13 3	12 2	6 2	6 2								
52	K3EGE	15	8	328		3 2	6 2	3 2	1 1							2 1
53	K3IB	29	7	203		29 7										
54	W3HJ	32	4	180		19 2		13 2								
55	K3BFS	28	5	140		28 5										
56	KB2AYU	9	6	90		3 2	3 2	3 2								
57	KB3HCL	11	4	68	3 1	2 1	6 2									
58	N1XKT	17	2	50		9 1	8 1									
59	WA3WUL	6	1	48												6 1
60	KA3MGB	10	3	30		10 3										
61	N3YMS	41370 (Nicks total)	-	-												

Multi-OPS

Call	QSO's	Total Grids	Score	6M	2M	222	432	902/3	1.3 GHz	2.4 GHz	3.4 GHz	5.7 GHz	10 GHz	24 GHz	La-ser
N3NGE	1270	232	591832	359 62	372 48	152 38	192 34	47 10	60 14	32 7	25 6	15 6	14 6		2 1
Ops: N3NGE K9PW K1WHS K3EGE KB2AYU N3EXA K3DK															
K3EOD	422	93	69192	131 28	103 17	63 15	70 16	26 8	23 8						6 1
Ops: K3EOD NE3I WA3IAC W2SJ WA3WUL															
WB3IGR	219	67	28560	44 11	70 16	34 11	35 12	15 7	15 6	3 3					3 1
Ops: WB3IGR WF1L K3DMA															
W3CCX	122	17	2822	39 6	39 4	20 4	24 3								
Ops: KA3WXV KB3MTW K3BFS WA3QVU AG3L KD3DI															

Preliminary Contest Report

First of all, this year we had 66 Packrat logs submitted to the ARRL for a combined club score of 2,659,242 points [later corrected to **2,700,612—Ed.**] GREAT JOB!!!

The ARRL has now posted the claimed scores for the logs submitted. We all know there will be some adjustments in scores after the league does its log checking.

HOWEVER, as the scores currently stand the Packrats did another outstanding job in placing stations in the top spots in the COUNTRY in many categories as follows:

SINGLE OP HIGH POWER:

2nd Place - K3TUF 272,384 points
3rd place - WB2RVX 200,431 points
4th place - WA2FGK - 115,710 points
6th place - WA3DRC - 94,400 points

SINGLE OP LOW POWER:

1st place - W3SZ - 186,415 points
2nd place - WA3NUF - 132,496 points
3rd place - N3RG - 91,000 points

ROVER:

1st place - NN3Q/R - 110,288 points
4th place - K1DS/R - 100,800 points (NOTE: Rick's operation was limited to Sunday and very little time on Saturday!!)

MULTI-OP UNLIMITED:

1st place - N3NGE - 591,832 points
3rd place - K3EOD - 69,192 points

WAY TO GO PACKRATS!!!

73,

Bill - K3EGE

K3IPM's Florida and Pennsylvania QTH's

Being a team captain for the VHF SS is often a big responsibility. I had to travel all the way to Boca Raton, Florida to make sure that one of my "Central Core" stations was ready to be active! **Hi Hi!** I visited Stan K3IPM at his lovely QTH off Glades Road and snapped this picture of his stealth antennas in the back yard.



As you can see, he has a similar crank-up tower there in Florida that almost matches the one he has on his mobile trailer for use here in January. Since there are usually restrictions about these kinds of antennas in many of the communities, Stan keeps it tucked low, just under the tree line and not really visible from outside the back yard. You'll also note another piece of aluminum hidden in the foliage that he uses for the lower bands. I was truly amazed that Stan

...K3IPM cont'd

disassembles his VHF station, lays everything out for transport back north for the contest, including rigs, transverters, amplifiers, and wattmeters. All this is then packed into his vehicle, loaded onto the car train for the trip and then reassembled at his operating position here in the Ft. Washington, PA area.



Stan has been at the contest for decades and says **he wouldn't miss one**. Hope that all of you have him in your logs on many bands. 73, Rick, K1DS

Tnx too to K3JJZ for some of the pix.

...Strays

Here's a pic of Bob, W2SJ's temporary antenna setup at his new QTH. A more elaborate array is in the works some time later this year.



WA3SRU's New Tower

I have been looking for a new tower since my mast bent during Hurricane Sandy. Rather than go through the ordeal of hiring the bucket truck whenever I needed something done, I decided to look for a crank up / tilt over tower for the future. Even used, they go for a lot of \$\$\$.

About three weeks ago, (late January) I was looking through all the ham & other web sites to keep up with any new offers for towers. I went to the eHam website and found this tower was just added for sale. The price was very realistic. I called him immediately and bought it. It came with the \$300 base and a brand new thrust bearing. He bought this tower 4 yrs ago and purchased the new base. It has been sitting for 4 yrs. Due to some health issues, he never put the tower up. The tower is exactly like Michael, KB1JEY's. It is a Hygain HG-54HD. Extended it is 54ft and retracted is 21ft.



We left the morning of 2/16/2013 at 5:15 a.m. and got to Douglas, MA at 10:40 am. We were able to back the trailer all

the way past his garage and parked a little past the tower, which was on blocks. My amazing 2 helpers actually lifted the base end and pivoted it right onto the mover dolly on the trailer. We walked it to the

front of the trailer and placed the base about 2" from the jack stand. We pushed all sections together and the tower fit **without any overlap** out the back. We left at 11:00 exactly. Not bad for 2 young guys and an old guy. Didn't need any of the support stuff we brought other than 1 mover dolly. Everything was strapped down, including the base cage. There were several accidents near New York so we lost a little time, but we kept moving. We used the Washington Bridge since it was Saturday with not much traffic. We got home at 4:30 and



unloaded the tower onto **W2TAG's & N3RG's** tower dolly system. We rolled the tower into the back yard without the need for plywood. The large tires were fine all by themselves.

Next comes some cleanup work and removal of the cables and winch. The winch is being replaced. Not sure yet whether to use a hand winch or an electric winch. Any suggestions for electric winches? Will be replacing all cables too. Will probably wait till the weather starts to warm up before digging the hole. So, right now, a hot cup of tea and a nice dinner Marie made for our arrival.

On a side note, the bucket truck showed up on Thursday afternoon and we were able to carefully straighten the bent aluminum pipe holding my antennas pretty close to vertical. Unfortunately, the mast is binding on the 2 screws in the side of the rocket top tube, so the rotor can't turn the mast. I will leave this tower & antenna's in place until the new tower is ready for antenna's.

73's Proud Papa Joe - WA3SRU

TALES OF TEARS: THE 2013 ANNUAL CRYING TOWEL MEETING

Reported by Michael Davis KB1JEY

While there is much opportunity for improvement of my radio station and operating techniques, I had little to cry about during the January 2013 VHF Contest. Thus, I volunteered alongside George KA3WXV and Paul WA3GFZ to judge the tales of woe which arose during this year's contest.

WA3SRU went first and recounted his problematic mast, which became bent during Hurricane Sandy. Worse, the contractor with the bucket truck kept on missing appointments leading up to the contest. During the contest, Joe decided to leave his antennas in same position as much as possible and work as many stations as he could with that limitation. Considering his station's handicap, Joe did pretty darn well. He is now in serious preparation to install a crank-up, lay-over tower with a **new mighty mast**.

JOE KC2TN was up next. Joe hit the problem that many of us encounter during contest preparations: running out of time. His 222 MHz transverter showed no output or exhibited a condition that Joe called "FMing". Antennas that he ordered for 903 MHz and 2304 MHz arrived late. Joe became **so disgusted** that he hit the [wine] bottle illustrated by a photo he shared post-contest with his Packrat friends. The caption: "The more I drink, the better my audio sounds". Worse, during the contest, 432 MHz failed and 6 meters started to show distortion. The last laugh was that on some bands where he thought he had no output, he later discovered that he had **bad slugs for his watt meter**. He also learned that his ICOM IC-910H radio will need some repair.

JON W2MC had an interesting problem for a rover. His **van went bad**, necessitating the purchase of a new pickup. The problem with the pickup as a rover vehicle is the need to do a lot of set-up for each stop in the cold. Brrrrr!!!

TED W2TAG had an excellent excuse from his physician for not operating during the contest. He spent the contest in a **hospital** in Lancaster, PA. Ted reported **feeling much better now**.



EL K3JJZ thought that he would improve his station by making a microphone switch that would allow him to use the same microphone with any of his rigs. However, during the contest, the **DPDT switch went out**. Post-contest, El discovered that the problem was corrosion. Where did that switch come from? The estate of Ernie K3KKN, of course! Somewhere in heaven, Ernie must be having a **heck of a laugh**.

BILL K3EGF'S roving efforts came to an abrupt end when his car hit a deer. **The deer, whose call sign is unknown**, was not able to put in a roving log either. What a waste of antlers!

DOC W3GAD had no use of the 2304 MHz band during the contest, probably due to antenna problems.

JIM WA3EHD gave a brief report of his contesting efforts.

JOE KIJT probably set a record for the **farthest QSO** for a single band operation. He only used 2 meters. One of Joe's excuses was that he was recovering from a case of the shingles that he contracted in December.

PHIL WA3NUF reported that his transverter switch failed Sunday night and that he lost a 12 VDC power supply during the contest. His teachable moment: **when your station gets to be 35 years old**, anticipate that "schtuff" is going to fail at the worst possible moment.

DREX W3ICC reported that his roving ambitions got "stuck in the gate" when his lovely XYL, Bonnie developed medical conditions that kept him close to home [author's note: Drex, that is how I got my crank-up tower approved by my XYL]. Drex also reported that his **various beams were pointed in every direction**, courtesy of Hurricane Sandy.

The **winner**, in a manner of speaking, was **JOE KC2TN** whose collection of problems and story-telling netted him the embroidered terry cloth prize. **TED W2TAG** took custody of the runner-up "crying napkin", which is passed along each year to the next "winner" along with the previous recipient's signature on the protective envelope.



So **learn what you can** from these anecdotes so you can avoid being in the running for the 2014 Crying Towel and Crying Napkin. The 2014 towel has already been embroidered. At the very least, if you must, please bring a fresh tale of woe to the February 2014 session.



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Registration/Flea Market open at 9 am, Talks start at 10:15 am.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Frank O'Brien,
Solar System
Ambassador for NASA's
Jet Propulsion Lab
on
"Roving Robots
on Mars:
The Journey
of Curiosity"*



- Mac/OS X/iOS All Day, with Apple's Dave Marra.
- Windows 8/Office 2013 Talks by David Soll.
- Building Apps for the New Windows Store by Microsoft's David Isbitski.
- Building Apps for Android Phones & Tablets by Author Barry Burd.

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Friday March 15, 2013, 8:30 am — 5:00pm**
Continuing as part of TCF's Saturday Talks.
For Conference Info and Fees See
<http://www.tcf-nj.org/pc>

* Keynote co-sponsored by IEEE-PCJS Robotics and Automation Society.
**The IT Pro (Friday) and ISEC Conferences require separate registrations.

HackTCNJ Hackathon - For Info: <http://hacktcnj.com>
Located in the Brower Student Center.

Integrated STEM Education Conference (ISEC)**

Saturday, March 9 — 9:00 am — 5:00 pm
at Friend Center, Princeton University, NJ
Best practices in K-20 STEM education.
Info: <http://ewh.ieee.org/conf/stem/>

For additional TCF'13 info,
directions and advance tickets:
www.tcf-nj.org

DOOR
PRIZES

The 2013 Trenton Computer Festival™ is sponsored by The College of New Jersey and its School of Engineering.

2013
P-R-O-V-I-D-E

The Wayback Machine

Gleaned from the pages of
Cheese Bits, March 1963

(Vol. V Nr. 1)

(Authors comments in *italics*)

- Cover. January VHF Sweepstakes. Packrat score 807,886 (*Remember the admonition in previous issues to "Make it a Million". We came close!*).
- Contest operating details. Logs submitted from 79 active members, 6 retired members, and 1 student member. Top score Ernie, W3KKN. 2nd place, Stan, K3IPM, with a difference of 1104 points.
- Technical 1. Information provided for an 8 Mc (MHz) VFO. This included the schematic and parts layout. The design featured an OA2 regulator (*who remembers what that was?*). (*Before the Digital age! The 8 Mc VFO was standard equipment in shacks back then. Many of us used a converted ARC-5 aircraft xmtr as the source*).
- Technical 2. Audio Amplifier and Phase Inverter construction details. Built around a 3-triode Compactron (*remember them?*), the Phase Inverter was intended to feed a balanced modulator to generate your SSB signal.
- Packrat W3ELI (George Van Dyke) volunteered and was accepted for the post of EC (Emergency Coordinator) for the E.PA. section.
- ARRL Building Fund, and Headquarters

presentation trip. Details announced as follows: Cost \$10.00 which included round-trip bus ride and one meal in W. Hartford CT (*try to do that today!*); Departure 4:00am; parking at NE Airport; restricted to those that donated by purchasing a "brick"; and advance payment required. Saturday, date to be announced shortly. (*This was the trip during which the Packrats presented the scale model of the new Hdq building, covered with bricks engraved with the donor's call. Still on display at Hdq*).

- Requirements restated for receiving the certificate for working Packrats.
- From Swap Shoppe. For Sale, 15" Westinghouse Color TV Set. Good working condition. \$75. K3IUV. (*I wish I had kept it as the antique it was!*).
- A letter received from VP W3LHF, Dave, reports on his activity at RPI, including trying to operate the W2SZ college station but finding the 2-meter rig broken, and the 6-meter beam pin-wheeling atop an 80' tower! (*They've certainly improved the station since then!*).
- February's meeting speaker Mr. Barnes, from the Bell telephone Co. (*where did they go?*), gave a slide show, talk and details about the Telstar satellite.
- In memoriam page for member W3ASD (Karl Vincent) who became a silent key on Feb 25, 1963. (*Known*

affectionately as The Ole Fat Boy, Karl was a reliable Delaware contact for many of the members in the Jan test).

- More certificates available. Endorsement seal to the Pagoda award from the Reading Radio Club. Work 15 additional members for the seal. Five Towns Radio Club. Work 5 members of this Long Beach, Long Island Club and receive a nice certificate.
- Official ARRL Bulletin NR 885. Active amateurs are invited to submit a monthly station report to the SCM. Club, Net or traffic news, as well as operational data are welcomed.

(As in previous editions, many “folksy” comments about members, their families, and activities were included in this Cheese Bits. If interested, visit www.W3CCX.COM and read the full issue posted there).

thirty, de K3IUU



Events

For inclusion, please direct event notices to the editor.

38th Annual Trenton Computer Festival - March 16, 2013 Talks, Forums and Flea Market at The College of New Jersey. For details see <https://www.tcf-nj.org>. Details to follow.

April / May VHF/UHF Sprints: 2 Meter Sprint— April 1, 2013 7-11 pm Local. Sponsored by CSVHF Society. Hosted by John, K9JK. See <https://sites.google.com/site/springvhfupsprints/2013-announcement-rules> for rules.

Sprints: 222 Meter Sprint— April 16, 2013 7-11 pm Local. See <https://sites.google.com/site/springvhfupsprints/2013-announcement-rules> for rules.

SVHFS Conference—April 19-20, 2013. Hilton, Cocoa Beach FL. See <http://www.svhfs.org> or email Chuck at k0vxmfl@gmail.com for further details.

Sprints: 432 Meter Sprint— April 24, 2013 7-11 pm Local. See <https://sites.google.com/site/springvhfupsprints/2013-announcement-rules> for rules.

39th Annual VHF/UHF/Microwave Conference— April 26-28, 2013. Baymont Inn, Manchester CT. <http://www.newsvhf.com/vhfconf.html> or p.12 for further info.

Sprints: Microwave (902+)— May 4, 2013 6am -1 pm Local. See <https://sites.google.com/site/springvhfupsprints/2013-announcement-rules> for rules.

Warminster Amateur Radio Club - Hamfest May 5, 2013. Middletown Grange Fair Grounds, 576 Penns Park Rd., Wrightstown (Bucks Co.) PA. \$5 per person (unlicensed spouses & kids under 13 free). Huge indoor facilities with electric available at all tables. VE testing / WAS field

checking / Equipment check out table. See www.k3dn.org/hamfest.htm for additional details

Sprints: 6 Meter Sprint— May 11-12, 2013 2300Z—0300Z. See <https://sites.google.com/site/springvhfupsprints/2013-announcement-rules> for rules.

Dayton Hamvention - Hamfest (etc) May 17 –19, 2013 Dayton OH. See www.hamvention.org/ for details.

ARRL June VHF QSO Party - Contest June 8-10, 2013. The annual Camelback trek. See <http://www.arrl.org/june-vhf> for details.

ARRL August UHF Contest - August 3-4, 2013.
Details to follow.

10 GHz and Up (round 1) Contest - August 17-18, 2013. Details to follow.

September VHF QSO Party - Contest
September 14-16, 2013. Details to follow.

10 GHz and Up (round 2) Contest -
September 21-22, 2013. Details to follow.

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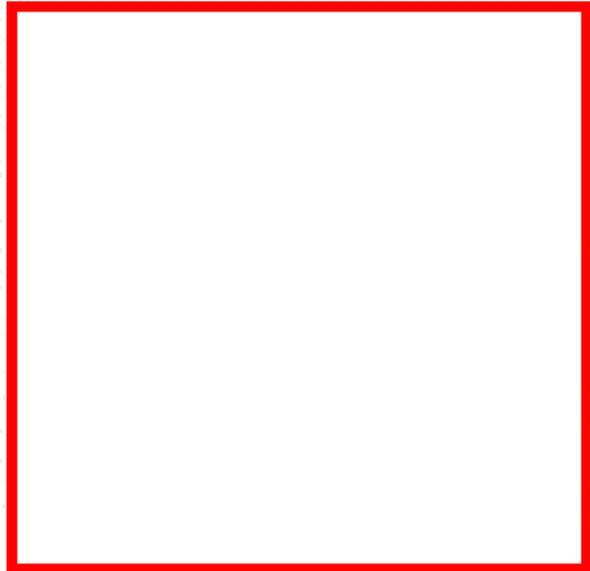
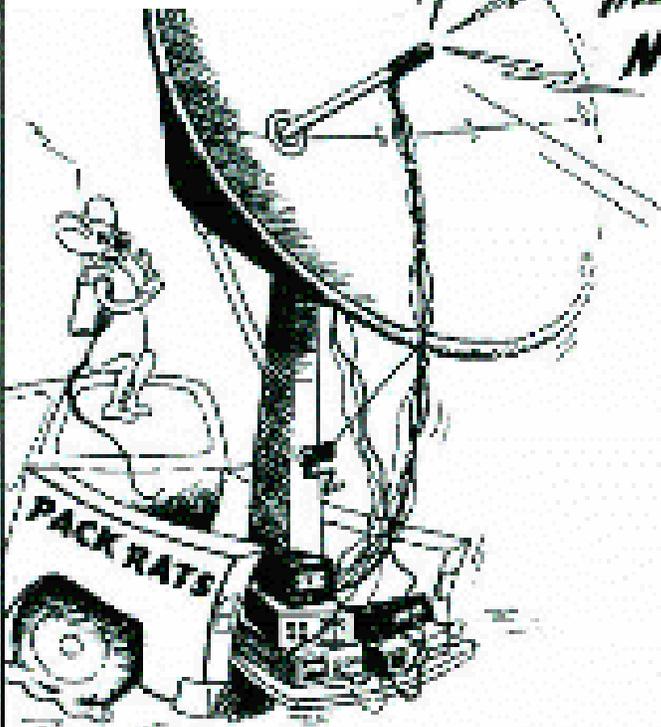
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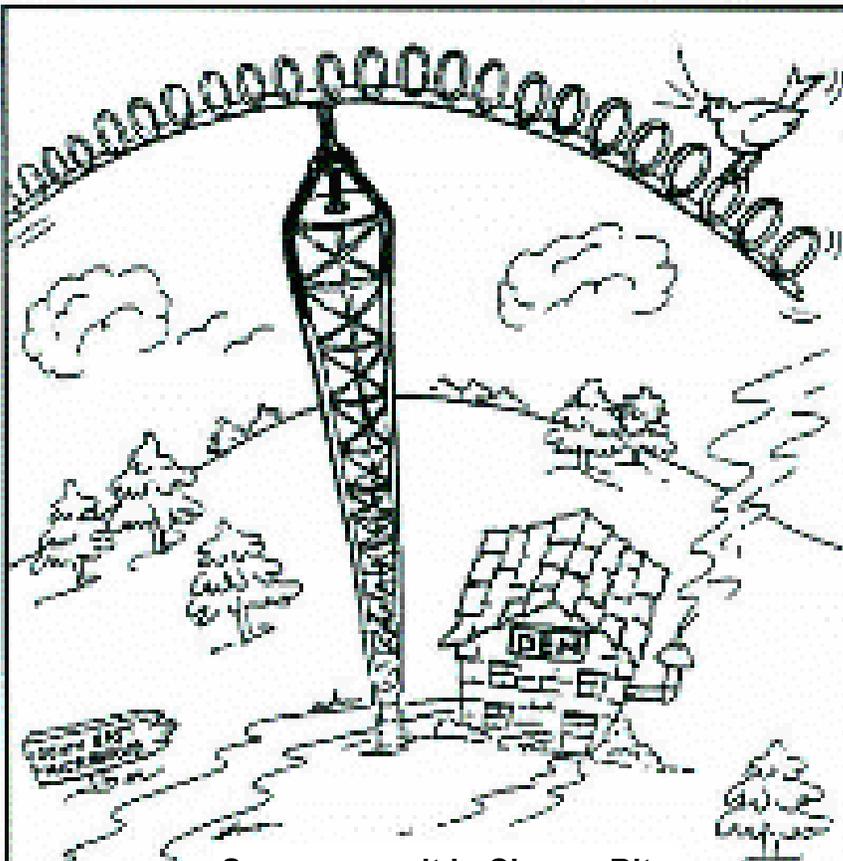
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