



CHEESE BITS

W3CCX
CLUB MEMORIAL CALL

ARRL
Affiliated
Club



Volume LIII

August 2012

Number 8

PREZ
SEZ:

Another of our own has gone on before us, **Steve Powlisen, K1FO** has joined Ed and Gene for some heavenly propagation.

As we all continue to age, it makes me want to commit to achieve all that I possibly can in pursuit of radio excellence. If you were considering another band, larger array, new tower, more power, or even a new radio, make it happen. We just don't know how much time we have here on this earth.

August is upon us and I am diligently working on a new configuration for my 5 and 10 GHz systems on the tower. I have been using a single environmental box that housed both bands with transverter, power supply, preamps and all associated equipment; but I found that it's too much in one box to facilitate maintenance on the tower. So last week I committed to bring it down and split everything into individual boxes.

This coming weekend is **host to a really fun ARRL contest**. Unlike the main events for us (January, June and September VHF) the August UHF contest only lasts 24 hours and it does not include the busy bands, 50 and 144MHz. You can concentrate on working all the rovers and making that long (weak) one on an upper band.

I'd really like to see our club get more involved in this fun event as it is now also a club Gavel contest.

Out in the central part of the country they hold "rover mania" making it very difficult for us to compete. But it is fun regardless. No matter how many bands you have, get on this weekend and give out some points. You can find everyone on either 222 or 432 and then move up to any additional bands you have working. Let me see just how many of you I can work this weekend.

For the other two bands we have the recently completed **CQ WW VHF** contest where only 50 and 144MHz are used. This year we had reasonable 50MHz openings, though not as prolonged as last year. How many contacts did you make?

Every two years we have a world wide Olympic event, as we enjoy this current one going on now, I am reminded that we have the exciting privilege of our own olympic event four times a year in our contests. They give us an opportunity to see just how well we are prepared to communicate on as many bands as possible.

We had some great **144 E skip propagation on July 24th** and a little the next evening. I was busy most of the day with my Geo Thermal installation but did manage to get

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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)

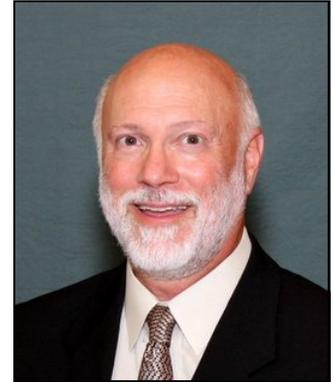
MONDAY NIGHT NETS

<u>TIME</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>NET CONTROL</u>
7:30 PM	50.145 MHz	K3EOD FM29II 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

some of the action in the early evening.

This has been a rare occurrence for those of us who only equipped for these bands in the last 10 years. You either have to be listening all the time or subscribe to a service that will notify you when conditions are enhanced.



Another great way to keep up on activity is to **subscribe to Stan, KA1ZE's daily report.** If you haven't already, send Stan your email and he will include you on his daily email list. You will receive a pdf file every day with what has been reported in activity on the previous day. And more importantly Stan, sends your reports of what you worked and its included in the report. Our net controls are listed in the report and some send reports every Monday night. Stan's email is: stanka1ze@aol.com. You can also see the archive of reports on his website: <http://ka1ze.com>.

Once again I want to urge you to register for the **Mid Atlantic States VHF conference.** It's going to be a great one with the N.E.W.S. group joining us this year. I always enjoy the close proximity of our own events; it sure beats driving across the country to get to mingle with like minded amateur radio aficionado's. **Lets pack the house.**

This is a busy month; in addition to the contest this weekend we have the Packrat Picnic the following weekend, 10GHz and up Contest the next weekend and the Perseids Meteor Shower peak from the 9th to the 14th of the month.

See you on the air this weekend and at the picnic the next.

Lets work on lots of bands.

Phil K3TUF

A HOBBY WITHIN A HOBBY

By Bert, K3IUV

Most (or at least many of us) had another hobby when we were young (a long time ago for some of us!) What is that you ask? Stamp collecting (Philately) of course. In my case it was in my early teens. Long forgotten, several years ago I uncovered my teenage stamp album (**a real Packrat never throws anything away**). It renewed my interest, and I began to accumulate other stamps, both recent and vintage, concentrating on stamps issued by the United States and it's territories.

As my interest continued, I wanted to integrate my interest in Radio Communications into the Stamp Collecting hobby. Well, how to do it?

There is an entire class of stamps pursued by collectors, which are termed Revenue Stamps. These stamp issues began in the early 1860's and were in response to the Revenue Act of 1862. The North started to tax a large variety of items, to fund the Civil War effort. This included such items as All Legal Documents (including bank checks, contracts, etc.); Medicines (yes, including the various elixirs and cure-all ointments), Matches (books and cartons); and others. Payment of the tax was verified by affixing Revenue stamps to the item.

Similar in nature and almost fitting into the category of Revenue Stamps, are **Telegraph Stamps** (here's the Radio Connection!). First, a little background. The various telegraph companies that came into existence following Morse's first experimental Public Telegraph line (April 1845) issued these stamps. Private companies then began stringing telegraph wires in many populated areas. By 1850, there were almost 50 of these private companies vying for business. Just as today, many of them soon consolidated in an attempt to improve their business ventures. The first transcontinental telegraph line was completed in October 1861. Funding for use of the telegraph lines was obtained by charging a tariff to the sender or recipient.



A Typical Telegraph Stamp

...Stamps cont'd



Here's what came on a telegram in 1906

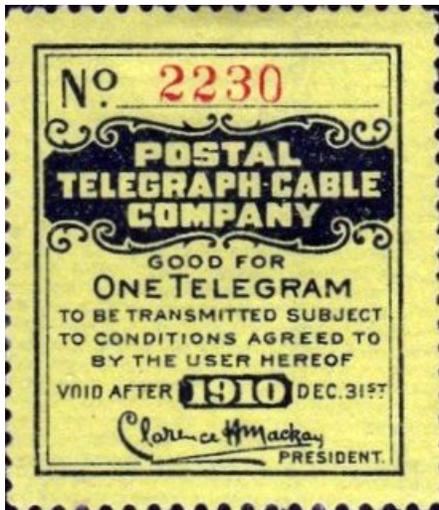
In the late 1850's the use of "Prepaid" stamps came into use in the US. Also, "Collect" stamps were issued, which required the recipient to pay the amount due before being allowed to receive or read the telegram! The cost of telegrams (and thus the face value of the stamps) ranged typically from 1c to 50c, based on the message size and destination. Also common were stamps bearing the legend "Good For One telegram of 10 (or however many) Words or Less." From this, grew the use of abbreviations, to reduce the word count (like today's "LOL", "QRZ", etc.?). In addition, many stamps were issued as "Complimentary", intended to be given

out as incentives by various business establishments (sort of like modern Green Stamps?).

The practice of using such stamps for telegraphic communication continued until about 1946, culminating in a Commemorative issue at the World Telecommunication Conference in Atlantic City in 1947.



With that as the background, I focused on acquiring representative stamps from the various telegraph companies that existed during this time frame. I also



wanted to mount and display them on explanatory pages, in an album. Creating the album pages was straightforward, albeit tedious. Using a CAD program (I'm partial to Drawplus), I created individual pages for many of the companies (My contribution to Homebrew Night?). On these pages, the stamps that were issued are organized by Company, Date, Denomination, and any other distinguishing characteristics. This task was made a little easier by referencing a set of sequential identifying numbers, assigned by the Scott Publishing Company (one of the standards used by

philatelists).

Suggested resale values for Telegraph, and most other stamps is also

Shack Improvements at WA3SRU

Joe isn't letting any grass grow between his toes. Here's a photo essay on his shack improvements - 2011-2012 —W2BVH

This is a continuation of a previous article "New Antlers in Warminster". That told about the new tower & the installation of my antenna's. This article continues with the installation of my 3 el Cushcraft A3S beam antenna and the installation of my cable run to the house and continues with the running of the coax's into the new ham shack room. The article finishes up with the building & setup of all my equipment to operate the January VHF contest.

... continued next page

...Stamps cont'd

shown in Scott and other catalogs. Next, how to acquire the specimens. Well, there are a number of stamp dealers that specialize in Revenue Stamps.

A search on the web will quickly point you to many them. Another source is listings on eBay, Bidstart or other web auction sites. A word of caution. These stamps, as well as all other collectibles are valued according to condition. An undamaged, well-centered, light (or no) cancellation example will bring a premium. If you decide you want to start such a collection, be careful to pay based on condition. A poor example is valued at significantly less than a prime example.

Interestingly, many of the very early issues are still available in MOG (Mint, Original Gum) samples. This suggests that many stamps languished in drawers or cabinets until later acquisition by stamp dealers. Value ranges from 20c to \$1000, based on scarcity and condition, with some of the early issues being the cheapest!

So, there you have it. Looking for another way to invest in your interest in communications? You could do worse than starting a collection of Telegraph issues and related paraphernalia.

thirty, Bert, K3IUV

This is my cable support system ready to be connected to the tower.



This is the installation of my Cushman A3S 3 EL Beam and cable support system.

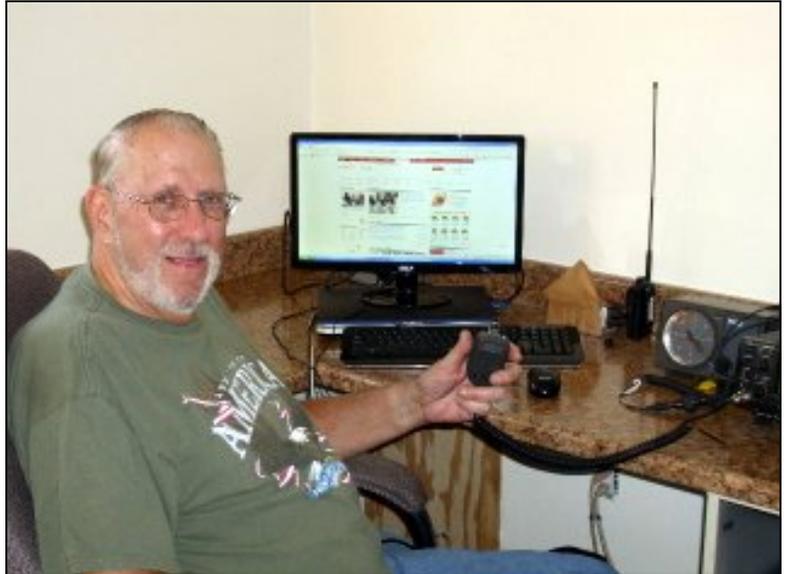
Other end of cable support is connected to eve of 2nd floor of house.



All coax's were run through the attic and fished down the wall in the new shack.



Six foot section of countertop in place and supported with a 2 drawer file



Placed my Icom 746Pro & Rotor Box on 1st section so I could check into net.



This is the rack given to me by W3ICC, Drex. I sanded and repainted it. I worked on equipment placement. I had wires all over the place while testing the operation of the equipment.



The rack all wired up and in place. The bottom is the AM-6155 amp. Above that are 2 – GlenAyre 28v 25amp power supplies. Above that on left is an Astron RS35M 13.8v 25amp supply. On right is a Power Source 13.8v 75amp switching power supply. Above that is 903 & 222 transverters with sequencers and power amps. Above that is a Teletec 432 amp that puts out 150 watts.

... WA3SRU cont'd



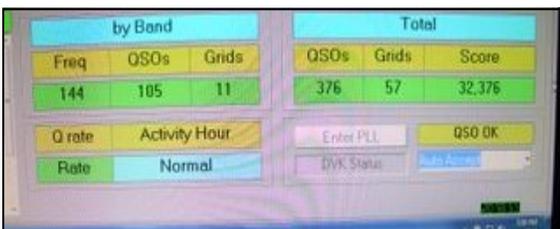
View of the transverter connections. 222 on the left with sequencer above it. The transverter will put out 25 watts but was scaled back to drive the AM-6155 amp. During the January contest I ran it at 250 watts output. On the right is the 903 transverter and sequencer. It's 1 watt output drives the DEMI 1in / 8out amp donated by Dr. Rick that drives the Motorola 903 amp. The amp was able to put out 180 watts but I ran it at 150 watts to a 33 el loop. I placed fans on the transverters and mid amp so all ran cool. I mounted both Narda relays for 222 & 903 to the aluminum



Front view of station. Equipment rack, Kenwood TS-430s for 903, Kenwood TS-430s for 222, Yaesu FT-736R from Bill, K3EGE, for the January contest. My 20" LED Monitor screen, wireless keyboard and mouse. The new PC under the counter is an HP Pavillion Slimline with 6 G memory and a 1 Terabyte hard drive. It has a UPS System in case of power failure to safely close down the system.



This view is of my Icom 746Pro and rotor box. On top of rotor is my Jetsteam 222 rig. On top of 746 is my MFJ Voice Keyer. Came in real handy on January Contest Sunday when contacts slowed down. On top of rig supply is a Signalink USB for working digital modes. Also seen is my Ameritron 811 Amp 600 watts out for the low bands. PC & UPS under the counter-top.



And last but not least, my monitor showing my final score for the January VHF Contest. Worked 59 Packrats over the 5 bands I operated on.

73, Joe WA3SRU

Steve Powlishen K1FO, SK

Just wanted to let you know that Steve passed away late this afternoon, July 28. You all know of his long struggle. I'll be seeing about funeral arrangements tomorrow at Clancy Funeral Home in East Haven.

Thanks,

I'm saddened to report that Steve Powlishen K1FO passed away late this afternoon Saturday 28 Jul 2012. Our thoughts are with Lori his XYL.

- Bob W1QA

I count myself fortunate to have known Steve both professionally and as a ham. A man with many interests and a wealth of knowledge and talent, in VHF, UHF, instrumentation, and propagation. RIP Steve.

Tom WA1MBA

The first time I met Steve on the air was on his New Years Eve net on 2M. That was in the 70's I think. The net was so much fun! He was WA1FFO at that time.

Dave W3KM

I first met Steve on the air back in the late Sixty's where a bunch of us would have a "chat" frequency on 2m ssb, usually around 144.200. No net, no protocol, just informal talk. The round table usually included WA1FFO, WA2BIT, K2RTH, K1PXE along with many others. K8III, Paul, would occasionally stop by.

Discussions were from radios to antennas and sometimes not related to ham stuff. Joe, W2EIF, would sometimes stop in. Joe was great on bringing technical explanations down to my level. I had four Mosley 9 element beams in an H frame with 300 ohm twinlead between the antennas and fed with 300 ohm twinlead down to the shack to a beer can 4:1 balun. I asked Joe about running the feed so close to other structures he responded that after so many wavelengths it didn't matter. Steve was to use a similar phasing arrangement for his antennas.

The first time I met Steve in person was at a N.E.W.S. conference. I already had purchased from Steve a LA72 and LA22 and just made a deal with Phil for a LA12 that he brought to the conference. Steve offered to take it home check it out and put a current cabinet on it to match the other two. Ed, WA3BZT, who I sorely miss, and I were in conversation of which Steve was privy to about the Lunar Links. Ed mentioned that all I needed was the 6m version. Steve said that the type acceptance was prohibitive. Ed then mentioned that a manufacturer could produce a couple of prototypes for consumer check out. The conversation continued to other topics then unexpectedly Steve piped in. I'll build you one. I am the proud owner of all four Lunar Links.

Steve's passing is a great loss to the Amateur community and he will be sorely missed.

Paul, wa3qpx

REMEMBERING K1FO

Steve Powlishen, who died July 28 (just two months after he turned 60) was not only an exceptional engineer and builder of potent RF amplifiers--he was also a premier VHF contester of the 1970s and 1980s.

Steve, K1FO (WA1FFO until 1977), built a super-station in Connecticut and became the odds-on favorite to be the top single operator in any VHF contest, just as K1TEO is the odds-on favorite today. I got to know him well because I also wanted to win VHF contests--and concluded that I had to have a good station in the northeast to have any chance against Steve.

I flew to Boston for the September, 1978, VHF contest, hauling seven suitcases of equipment. I rented a car, built a console inside, and parked on Mt. Equinox, Vermont. K1FO was well aware of this--and redoubled his own efforts so he could teach this California carpetbagger a lesson. And he did. Steve amassed the highest single-op score ever in the September VHF contest, and did indeed send me to the departure gates at Logan Airport vowing to try harder next time. (WA3AXV was a very close third in that contest.)

The next year I outfitted a Ford van with kilowatts on all bands through 432, added an Onan generator and mounted a tower on the rear deck. I drove east in 1979, towing a 70' tower trailer behind the van so I could have two towers on an eastern mountaintop for VHF contests.

Meanwhile, Steve built a killer home station. He was ready when I set up on Mt. Equinox for September, 1979 for a showdown in what was becoming a rivalry.

The record books say September, 1979, saw some of the best tropo conditions ever in a VHF contest. Steve and I both worked all the way from New England to Oklahoma on the VHF bands, working tropo DX on 2, 220 and 432 that Californians can only dream about.

Steve's previous record for September was 45,000 points (scores were much lower in those days because ARRL sections, not grid squares, were the multipliers--and roving had not been invented yet). We both shattered that record. I edged Steve out with almost 103,000 points, a September score that was never exceeded under the section multiplier scoring system. But Steve was destined to have the final word in the June contest.

The rivalry continued for a few more contests, then I abandoned these coast-to-coast VHF expeditions and tried to get serious about my career. The next year, Steve went all-out in the June VHF contest and scored almost 110,000 points--the highest June score ever posted when ARRL sections were multipliers. Then he, too, decided to concentrate on his career--and became **legendary** in his field.

It's very hard for me to accept that the guy I remember as a young kid in a red Ford Torino is gone forever. Like thousands of others, I will miss him.

-Wayne Overbeck, N6NB

Hi All. Yes Steve was a great ham and a good friend. I first met Steve when we were young men. I lived out west in Jamestown, NY (now FN02) and he was in CT. We and a lot of other young guys got together around 1971 to operate the WA1MUG contest station on Mt. Greylock, MA, for the June contest. That was the first year that group, mostly RPI graduates) scored a record high score for the June contest. (Eventually the WA1MUG call was abandoned and they began using the current W2SZ call.)

I clearly remember riding in the car with Steve and about 4 other guys, coming back up the mountain in the early morning and driving through alternating patches of fog and sun. We were all high from the successes of the previous day and when one of the guys commented that we were driving into a cloud, another said maybe we could work the cloud. Steve, who at that time held the call WA1FFO, yelled out "QRZ the Cloud". That broke everyone up and we were repeating it and laughing all the way to the top.

Steve had a set of unique phonetics for his call sign that I will not repeat here, but I'm sure some of the OT's will recall with a chuckle. It was a precursor to his current call, "K1 Far Out".

Over the years since then I have visited Steve at his home to see his enterprise, used his advice on antennas and amplifier construction, and of course worked him probably hundreds of times on 6 meters and above. One memorable time was when Al, K2UYH and I were checking SWR on the 70 cm feed for his 28 foot Kennedy dish. We had my 10 watt rig out in the back yard on a card table and connected to the feed. The dish was pointed straight up. It was the middle of the afternoon and we suddenly started hearing some CW. At first we thought it was coming from the basement shack, but we quickly discovered it was coming from the 726R. It was Steve calling CQ. We gave him a call and worked him. Of course with the dish pointed straight

up, we were working him with just the dipole feed!

I can remember hearing Steve no matter where I turned my long 432 Yagi during a contest. A lot of it was reflections from various water towers and other objects within 20 miles of my QTH in FM29. What a signal!

As so many have said, Steve will be missed. He will also be remembered as long as we live.

Very 73 Steve, and Rest In Peace.

Russ K2TXB

Dear Russ: Thank you for sharing those wonderful memories. I too will never forget "K One Far Out". RIP Steve.

-73, Ron WZ1V

During the 1970s I was a kid living in a rented house with a U-100 rotor strapped to the side of a chimney so you couldn't see it from the street. My call sign was WB2LNI. I was involved in many activities outside ham radio, and might have lost interest except that I could hear WA1FFO over a hundred miles away on 432 on a little wood boom long yagi. I thought that was really cool, so I built an all-homebrew SSB-CW station for 432 so I could work him, and Steve helped me debug the station on the air. I wasn't rare DX, I was just a kid with a homebrew UHF weak-signal rig that needed some guidance. I carried the lessons from designing and building that station into grad school, my professional career, and my further explorations in amateur radio.

Rick KK7B

Mid-Atlantic / N.E. VHF Conference

Great presentations, hospitality, buy and sell, buffet banquet and door prizes

*****SIGN up now at early bird rates*****

Friday Eve, Oct 12, Saturday October 13, 2012 at the Marriott Courtyard,
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Papers and presentations wanted for the Joint Mid-Atlantic & NE VHF
Conference

WE WANT YOUR CONTRIBUTION

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Information and Registration site now on-line at www.packratvhf.com



Congrats Rick!

A Quick Note From Gary On The White Elephant Sale

Hope everybody had a good time, looks like most got what they wanted and the rain held off until 11:00!

I would like to thank George and Michael for spending significant time all week here setting up, and running errands to get everything here by 7:15 on Thursday.

Bruce was here early on Thursday, and setup a good PA. Unfortunately a poorly timed accident caused the need for repair which is underway and will be done for next year.

El again did an excellent job as auctioneer to keep the evening moving along.

Dave always has a busy evening tracking money, I understand the club did well.

It was fun, now on to Al's for the 'Rat picnic!

Thanks everybody,

Gary WA2OMY

The Wayback Machine

Gleaned from the pages of
Cheese Bits, August, 1962

(Vol. V Nr. 5)

(Authors comments in *italics*)

- This issue, 10 double-sided legal size pages, again mailed for a 4½ cent stamp.
- Prez Sez. I told you last month to “**watch for a surprise**”. Well the surprise in August 1962 is that the Prez elect was this author, K3IUV. VP was W3LHF, Dave Zimmerman (later W3ZD). New officers, same great club.
- A lengthy dissertation on TVI, including cartoons, causes, fixes and some anecdotes was included. Also included were quotes of incorrect “fixes” offered by some appliance dealers. (*Those of you that never operated in the days of Rabbit ears and twin-lead feed don't realize how bad a problem TVI could be for the Ham operator. While generally not their fault, it was the subject of many lawsuits, neighbor arguments, and other discouraging practices. Most of us kept a well filtered set in the shack to demonstrate our “clean” rigs.*)
- Mother Rat, Helen, reminds the gang that OO (Official Observer) notices are to be respected and reacted to. Hams like to maintain “we do our own monitoring”, so we need to act accordingly. Stabilize your VFO, and check out your crystal frequencies!

- Another admonishment by Helen to “Get your articles in early”. (*Lenny still has the same problem, 50 years later!*)
- Two-meters. Dave, W3LHF reports activity and contacts from Maine to North Carolina, and exhorts the members to “listen”. He also notes the increased transition to SSB, with resultant better copy from distant stations (*yes, AM had been King, but was steadily losing ground to SSB*).
- Six-meters. Jules, K3MSV reports openings S, SW, and “8 and 0” land. Brief contact was made with a station in Venezuela, KP4's are “pinning the meter”, and some double hop to CA was worked. W3DZI reports working 13 states with a Sixer!
- A.R.E.A. (Amateur Radio Editor's Assn.) celebrates its 1st birthday. Our Cheese Bits editor was a charter member. The group focuses on improving the quality of the Amateur newsletters and generating public awareness.
- Contributions of \$1 still being solicited to “buy a brick for the ARRL Model”, to help contribute to the ARRL building fund. Contributors had their call engraved on a plastic brick (*courtesy of Frankie*) which was used to face the building model (*still to be seen if you visit league headquarters*).
- Evening Bulletin (*another “thing that isn't there anymore”*) reports on the launch of Oscar II on June 1st. Many copied the cw HI being transmitted.

Unfortunately, ARRL Bulletin 853 reports “the end of Oscar II on June 20”. Despite the short life, it was another milestone in the Ham Satellite program.

- Reminder that the Voice of America broadcasts a weekly Amateur Radio Program. The program consists of 15 minutes of gossip on the Ham bands, interviews with Amateurs around the world, and discussions of technical news of interest to amateurs and SWL’s. Frequencies and times were listed.
- Plans announced to create a “Packrat Certificate”, in response to many requests.
- As a result of a heavy windstorm, K3IPM, Stan arrived home from work and found all his antennas blown over (*so what’s new?*). Reported by K3IUUV, Bert on the 221.4 net after a call from Stan!
- Details of a nice editorial in the Philadelphia Inquirer, reporting on Ham help in emergency medical situations.
- White Elephant sale scheduled for August 22 meeting at Ernie’s. (*Another long-lived packrat tradition.*)
- W3GXB, Bob, change of address to Willow Grove. (*Bob [our 220 FM net control] has been with the club for a long time!*).
- New Products. W3NSI, Lyn notes that a series of long-lead Nuvistors, designed to be soldered directly into a

circuit, have been released by RCA. (**Michael, take note.**) (*Makes it a little hard to change in a hurry!*). A 13.5v (heater and B+) version is under development for mobile use (*overtaken by transistors!*).

thirty, de K3IUUV



Events

For inclusion, please direct event notices to the editor.

ARRL August UHF Contest - August 4-5, 2012.
Details to follow.

Packrat Annual Picnic BBQ, etc. - August 11, 2012. QTH of AI N3ITT. Watch the Packrat reflector for details.

15th International EME Conference Meeting
August 17 - 18, 2012, Churchill College, Cambridge UK. See <http://eme2012.com/> for details.

10 GHz and Up (round 1) Contest - August 18-19, 2012. Details to follow

September VHF QSO Party - Contest
September 8-10, 2012. Details to follow.

10 GHz and Up (round 2) Contest -
September 15-16, 2012. Details to follow

Joint Mid-Atlantic & Eastern VHF Conference Conference - October 12-14, 2012. Marriott Courtyard in Bensalem PA. Details to follow.

Microwave Update (MUD) 2012 Conference -
October 18- 21, 2012. Hosted by: The 50MHz and Up Group of Northern California. Details to follow.

G AND G ELECTRONICS OF MARYLAND

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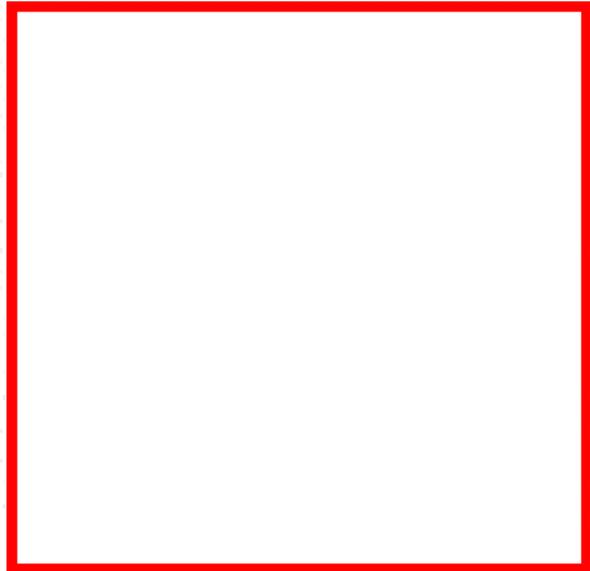
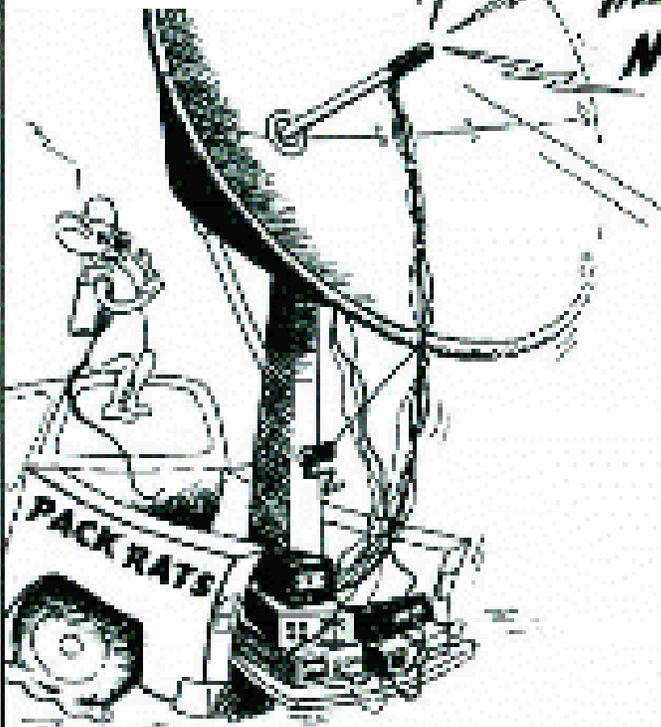
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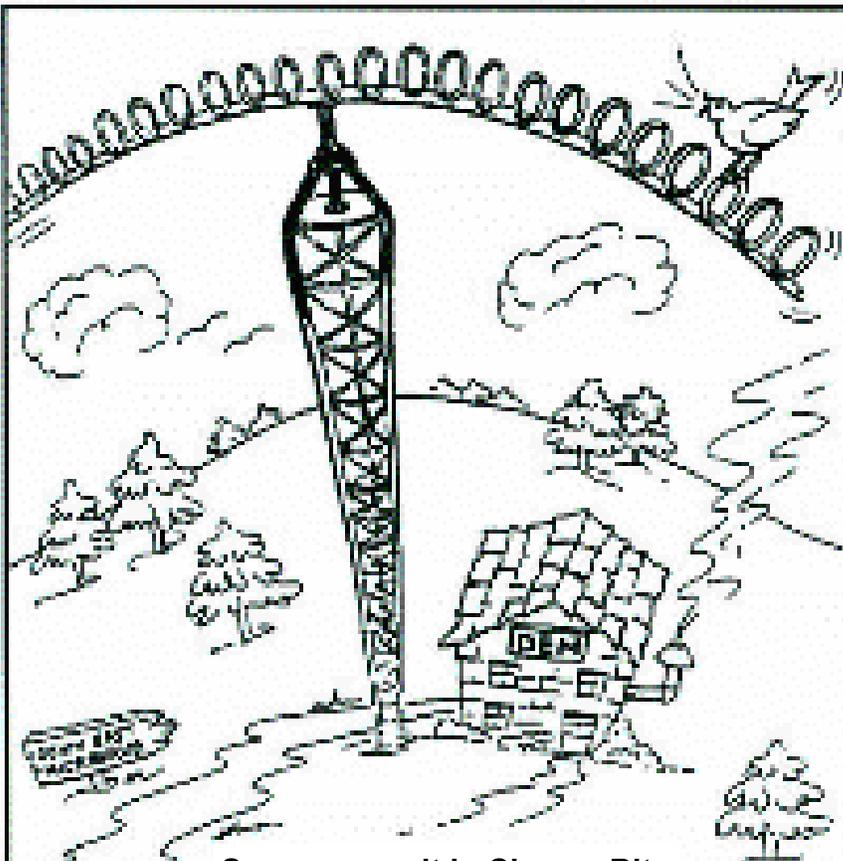
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