



CHEESE BITS

W3CCX
CLUB MEMORIAL CALL

ARRL
Affiliated
Club



Volume LIII

February 2012

Number 2

PREZ
SEZ:

Here we are rolling into the middle of winter with spring like weather lingering on and no serious weather in the forecast. What a relief on the heating bill and for those who must travel!

Many PACKRATS traveled to the Wrap-up session at NE3I's QTH. With **71 logs** submitted to the ARRL Contest Robot we have again **topped our best club turnout** for the contest. I have seen several very impressive scores – K3TUF really did generate over **800,000 points**. I hope those "Not In Log" penalties don't rob him of too many points. The Multi-op effort at **K3EOD** produced a **record score** from Vineland, NJ. I doubled my score from last year's exercise in repairs-on-the-fly during the contest – nowhere near my best effort from few years ago but a significant improvement over the recent past. Have you double checked your log to be certain you have entered all your contacts correctly and not missed an entry in your haste to move on to the next band? In the past I know a few such errors have plagued my score. I was extra careful to check calls and double entries using the VHFEVAL software provided with the W3KM logging program. Handy tool.

This leads us to the February 16th club meeting. Here is your opportunity to tell you tales of success or frustration to your peers. It is the annual **CRYING TOWEL** event, and K1DS has an updated version of the coveted *tear mop* for the most deserving performance. HI HI.

Rather than spending your free time challenging Mother Nature because of the unusual weather, why not get to work completing all those little projects pushed aside on the bench. Do your needed repairs and modifications for the next contest?

HOMEBREW NIGHT is just around the corner on March 15th and I would like to see what ever projects you all have been creating. We also accept photo essays if the results of your efforts are too big to bring to the meeting. The creative ideas of the PACKRATS have been copied by many others in the past.

Speaking of creativity, **Joe Taylor, K1JT** – a PACKRAT for many years, the creator of JT65 for digital EME contact, WSJT for meteor scatter, MAP65 and other digital software **has been honored** at the ITU conference in Geneva, Switzerland for his contributions to the growth of amateur radio. There was a very nice internet link to the presentation and Dr. Taylor's message to the conference. The ITU is the international body that strives to arrange for all nations to make the best use of the radio spectrum.

Looking ahead further we have **LADIES NIGHT** on March 31st. This is posted on the PACKRATSVHF web page and will be delivered, invitation style, to all member's spouses by snail mail in the near future. **George, KA3WXV and Michael KB1JEY** have been busy finding a **new venue** and planning the evening's activities. We expect an excellent selection of entrées and entertainment. I hope to see you all there.

Not too far down the calendar is the **June VHF QSO Party** the weekend of June 9th. The contest committee is already hard at work with the band captains getting all the details and logistics worked out via monthly teleconferences so there are fewer questions as the contest day approaches. Reservations for trucks and hotel rooms are already made and planning is underway on improved methods for safely raising towers. See Phil, K3TUF or Al, N3ITT to offer your help and support for the W3CCX CAMELBACK EXPEDITION, If you can not come to the mountain please make it a point to get on the air and submit your log to the ARRL. The JUNE VHF

Pack Rats **CHEESE BITS** is a monthly publication of the **Mt. AIRY VHF RADIO CLUB, INC.** -Southampton, 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 FM29II WA3QPX FM29di
8:00 PM	144.150 MHz	N3ITT FN20KI
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	903.125 MHz	OPEN

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

QSO PARTY is a **club scored event**.

Your log is important to the success that has made the PACKRATS a legend in the VHF/Microwave contesting community.



It is important to remember this is the member's radio club and it takes the efforts of all of us to maintain the quality that THE MOUNT AIRY VHF RADIO CLUB has come to represent.

We have elections coming up. The nominating committee will be contacting you to serve on the board of directors or to sit as an officer. Please give serious consideration to their requests. I know many of you have a lot to contribute to our continued growth.

I am also looking for a few additional helping hands for some of the background activities like arranging for the plaques and preparation of certificates in recognition those who have made superior efforts in the January contest, made a presentation for home brew night, earned honor as PACKRAT OF THE YEAR or qualified for the MARIO FONTANA AWARD.

We need some routine help at the monthly meetings: Who can be at the meetings to see to the Mario Auction tickets? Who can give Drex, W3ICC a hand with snacks and coffee during the meeting and many other little activities that help make our meetings fun and pleasurable. Just like the Public Radio and Television effort this time of year **we need you to step forward** and lend a hand.

As you can see the PACKRATS are a dynamic group and, as I have stated to new members on many occasions, **THIS IS AN ACTIVE CLUB**. We hope to see you on the air, and lending a hand at the meetings to keep your club moving forward. **This club is a lot more than contests** and we need everyone's efforts to keep us on the leading edge of the technology in the world of VHF/UHF/Microwave communications.

I have to admit I stole this closing line from earlier president's but it is still very important.

In the mean time be sure to **"LISTEN FOR THE WEAK ONES."**

73 de Doc W3GAD

2012 Mid-winter Storm Challenge Rove

As usual, anticipation is 90% of the enjoyment. Seeing all the plans and station changes and intense preparation by some, casual arrangements by others led to dreams of a fun and high scoring weekend. As the expression goes, “Man plans and G-d laughs.” Enter the fast moving storm of the month—not much of a biggie, but timing is everything. Luckily most of us saw this coming and we were able to complete any needed outdoor work in advance. I helped my son N1XKT get his mast and rotor set, and a friend and he managed to erect the antennas on Friday evening. I got all the antennas mounted on the rover on Friday and also did the final cabling of the rigs.

I awoke Saturday to find 3”-4” of snow on the rover, and realizing that several other rovers were canceling or modifying their plans, I decided to wait until 1PM to make my final decision on roving. Considering the traffic reports of multiple accidents on the Turnpike and the wet conditions with freezing temperatures expected overnight, I decided to stay closer to home and split Saturday operating between FM29 in Newtown Square and FN20 in Montgomeryville. The hazard was that all of the places that I visited were either snow or ice covered and very slippery. I was afraid of getting stuck with my rear-wheel drive van, but fortunately was able to maintain traction with slow and steady movement. Fortunately the Packrats were actively on the air and by the time I got home at midnight, I had 23,000 points in the log, including nice runs through 10GHz with WA3DRC and WA3NUF. All this in spite the problems we had practicing from that same location a few weeks earlier. What made the difference? The map from N3FTI that showed I had a better direction to point.

Once home, I ran downstairs to operate the lower three bands with the attic antenna and I managed a page of local contacts.

Sunday morning I added another few QSOs from home and then got started on the route to Mt. Mitchell in the NJ Highlands. First of course, there was a stop at KB1JEY to catch a few more microwave QSOs and a LASER contact. With a bit of coaching, his gear was doing OK. There is a point to be made about making sure your gear is operational before the contest to maximize its utility during the weekend. I left his driveway at 9:15 and managed to make my first QSOs from Mt. Mitchell at 11AM. The activity was moderate, and I was able to add many of those NE grids that I usually am unable to work from the Philadelphia area. After 2 hours from the edge of FN20 beaming northeast and northwest, I moved to FN30 and had an awful time with a S9+ pulsating noise. I had to leave to try another spot and beamed south to Packrat territory. I managed to work N3YMS thru 1296 with excellent signals down the coast. Then 6 meters opened and the bands went quiet, while 6 was jammed. I caught 2 Florida grids and during the pileups, took the time to start driving back south.

By 5PM, I was at N3NGE’s. The trees planted along the drive to his home are growing to the point where it is becoming difficult for the rover van with antennas attached to pass through unscathed. I chatted with Len and Linda a bit, then started back to work again, running the

.....Rover
 bands from the 4-grid corner of FN20-10-FM19-29. It was exciting to have three big guns (N3NGE, W3SZ, K3TUF) on bands through 10GHz and 24GHz and also work additional rovers in the area. I worked NN3Q/R and K3EGE/R through 2.3G + LASER. By the time 11PM rolled in, I had over 130,000 points in the log and was ready to roll home. Exhilarated and exhausted, I made it back by midnight, and waited until a break in the rain Monday to disassemble the rover and get it back in the garage.

Many up north experienced frozen rotors, and others were limited in air time with winter ailments. Almost all the Packrats seemed to be filling the bands with plenty of signals and filling their logs. I know that I missed many of you, but as I posted before the weekend, I am the driver, mechanic, safety officer, operator, logger, and having spent about 12 hours of the contest on the road driving and assembling/ disassembling on each site, it limits the total operating time.

73's and thanks to all who did find their way into my log. Rick, K1DS/R

K3TUF 2012 Sweepstakes Result

It was a great contest and I am so grateful to all the members who got on and worked the contest. Participation from my perspective here in FN10 was up. It seemed like I worked more members than in the past. Ben will have to verify that.

Thanks also to the rovers who braved the weather, others never made it out: W1RT, K8GP, N3IQ etc.

All of my equipment worked without failure, I'll save the pre-contest failure for the crying towel meeting.

Some have said that activity was down, yet I experienced increased contacts and grids over what I experienced the last several years. This is finally a reversal. I had been declining

since my previous high score in 2006, a year when many rovers were out in force. Its may be the first time ever to break 800 QSO's.

I'm really sorry to hear that some members had so much icing. What will happen if we have a contest where all members are able to get on and the weather is good enough for all rovers to participate?

Rates early in the contest approached that of an HF contest. My logging program says that max rate was over 200/hour.

Band	QSO's	Grids
50	270	51
144	202	44
222	92	28
432	119	30
902	33	8
1296	42	11
2304	26	8
3456	16	5
5760	7	4
10368	9	5
24192	5	4
LITE	1	1
TOTALS	822	199

73,
Phil K3TUF

Soapbox from KC2TN

What a difference a year makes....!
 What a difference a mild winter makes...!
 What a difference a rotor makes....!
 What a difference adding a new band makes....!

A difference from 5460 pts to 28,764 pts!

73,
Joe - KC2TN

Michelle's 2012 Contest

Hi Len.

You can put down that I made 119 contacts. Almost **double** from last year, but not quite my record of 122 two years ago. Still haven't heard from the condo assn'. So I will be returning Ray his squalo and put up a dipole at least for now.

Michelle London
KB3MTW

W2BVH Contest Comments

I discovered a 6:1 swr on the 432 antenna in early winter and didn't get around to doing anything about it until very late. Getting up on the steeply pitched roof to lower the telescoped pole and repair the antenna in the winter cold is too much to ask. So I solved the problem by throwing a few bucks at it. I ordered a 15 el K1FO 432 antenna from Dave at Directive Systems. It arrived the Wednesday of the contest week and I assembled it that night (in the dining room). Warren WB2ONA and his crew came over on Thursday and he hung the new antenna temporarily about 4 feet off the roof.

Thanks Warren!!!

The first day of the contest was plagued by technical problems but I did get a chance to operate on all 4 bands that I'm equipped for.

I got good signal and audio reports for my Q's on 222, with the help of a 100W brick loaned by Bill K3EGE. Thanks! I'm convinced that I'm making a big out-of-band spur with my homebrew 222 transverter and could use some help tracking it down and fixing it (or the loan of some instruments so I can do it myself) .

... W2BVH

By Sunday some of the technical issues were resolved and I finally got a chance to put the converted WCBS 6 Meter power amplifier on the air for the first time. It worked flawlessly and it made being heard a bit easier. I ran it at around 7-800 watts without popping the 110 VAC circuit breaker. The amplifier fans are a bit too loud and I'm working on fixing that now.

Net results were 256 Q's and 16K+ points. A lot better than last year, but not as good as 2 years ago.

I'll have all equipment operational and tested well in advance of the 2013 contest. (Maybe)

73,

Lenny W2BVH

The WA3QPX Contest

To: Dave Mascaro W3KM
Subject: log

Antennas frozen Saturday caught a Virus Sunday 2:00 am, spent the next three days in and out of ~~—deleted—~~ and bed. Almost ashamed to turn this in but every little bit helps.
Paul, wa3qpx

To: Paul WA3QPX
Subject: log

Thanks Paul. Yes every log helps. Plus we are trying to break the all-time highest number of member submitted logs - was 70 in 2010.

Stay well.
Dave W3KM

NOTE; On-air reports to your editor from WA3BZT indicate that frozen rotors were a problem in almost all of Delaware for the whole weekend. Hope for better weather next January. —W2BVH

KB1JEY Temporary Microwave Tower for the Sweepstakes

Hello Friends,

I took yesterday (1/17/2012) off from work and caught some breaks. George KA3WXV had the afternoon to donate to the cause. We did the initial assembly on the living room floor and when we were ready to do final assembly, we had no rain and warm temperatures [but a lot of mud]. **It was a two donut job.**



Top three antennas are loopers for 903, 1296, and 2304. The 3456 antenna that I bought from W2SJ is mounted below. Tower is a loaner from Dr. Rick. The rotator is an HD-73 that I picked up at Timonium. There is some loaner coax from K3TUF.

Dr. Rick stopped by a few weeks ago to replace the driven elements and add new hardline and N connectors on the 1296 and 2304 loopers. Probably should replace the cone N connector and hardline for the 903 antenna with a new one after the contest. The 2304 antenna came from a trade with Doc W3GAD in exchange for the carcass of my blown FT-857D. The 903 and 1296 antennas are only the back halves.

If you look in the background, you can see the Hy-Gain HG-54HD with the lower four bands, ready to contest and the G5RV for 60 meter liaison.

73,

Michael KB1JEY

K3IPM Contest Antennas & Rig

Here are a couple of pictures Stan's passed along of his temporary contest setup.



Multiple power amps account for the easy-to-copy signal from K3IPM. Note the feedlines going straight out the window.



Here is Stan's highly engineered tower-on-a trailer. It helps account for his contest results of 659 Q's, 110 Grids and 111,760 claimed points. Way to go!

Pix from the Contest Wrap-up Meeting at NE3I's





Joe Taylor Addresses ITU Conference



Joe addressed the Plenary Session of the 2012 ITU World Radiocommunications Conference in Geneva on Feb 3. He's shown here receiving the IARC Life Membership certificate from Dr Hamadoun Touré, HB9EHT, ITU Secretary General .

Joe writes: In addition to the formal address I made to WRC-12 Conference held by the ITU, there was a gala celebration celebrating the 50th anniversary of the International Amateur Radio Club (IARC). If you're interested, a few more pix of both events can be found at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/itupictures/collections/72157629055161979/>

After the gala dinner, several of us -- OM1AM (president of IARC), SV3SJ, G0MJW, K1JT, -- put 4U1ITU on the air on 1296 MHz EME. We had only 4x55 el loopers and 20 W from a DB6NT transverter, but using WSJT we provided new DXCC credits to a handful of stations on three continents. **It was a blast!**

-- 73, Joe, K1JT

...STRAYS

The Packrats took first place in the Medium Club Category in the September 2011 Contest - edging out the North East Weak Signal Group.

See - it pays to submit your log no matter what contest it is - you never know what might happen. WAY TO GO PACKRATS!!!

73, Bill - K3EGE

The Wayback Machine

Gleaned from the pages of
Cheese Bits, February, 1962
(Vol. IV Nr. 11)

de Bert, K3IUUV

Club History highlights. W3SAO, Frankie Brick provided a short paragraph for the monthly highlights, May 1957 to April 1958 (2nd year for the Packrats). Abbreviated as follows:

1. May. Started program to assist Boy Scouts to become Hams.
2. June. TVI committee formed. Elections. Bell Tel talk on Transistors.
3. July. Picnic. Well attended, Ft. Washington State Park.
4. August. Outdoor meeting at Ernie's. 6-meter project discussed.
5. September. Delinquent members notified. Action to be taken at future meeting.
6. October. Committee to find new meeting place. Code classes started. 6-meter club project underway.
7. November. 1st meeting in new location, West Oak Lane JCC. (*Mtg.'s continued there for many years*). **1st member dropped** for dues delinquency (!).
8. December. Contest Preparation. Also, the President commented that "immoral character" was a reason for Blackball of an applicant.
9. January. Second VHF Sweepstakes entry. **Club was in 5th place.** Score was 169,946. Highest scoring member, Ernie, W3KKN (22,848 points).
10. February. Ladies night date (4/12/58) announced. Southwark Athletic Club. Motion to request W3CCX (Matt Gelardi memorial) for club activities.
11. March. Club member W3JAY spoke on effects of electric shock of the heart (*think safety*).

12. April. Adopted W3KKN 's suggestion that members report band conditions for Cheese Bits. (**Cheese Bits Inaugural issue**).

13. May. VHF editor of QST, Ed Tilton, W1HDQ (*Mr. VHF*), spoke on "Getting The Most Out of Ham Radio"

- Helen reported an hour by hour account of W3SAO's contest *activity (Jan 6-7, 1962)* and score at each point. (*Not much different than Ben's analysis today*). Also included a contest recap of overall club operation.
- ECHO-II Satellite announced. Scheduled for release March/April 1962, and expected to provide Amateur opportunity for reflective contacts. It will be a 135' rigid sphere, in a polar orbit, at 600-mile altitude. It will carry a 136-Mc (MHz) beacon transmitter. W1HDQ suggests contacts will require a station with 1) Low Noise Converter; 2) reasonably high power and CW; 3) a High-Gain Beam, able to be tilted at least 35°.
- The ARRL issued a caution against Amateurs broadcasting or airing political commentary. Some amateurs have advocated the use of amateur frequencies "to fight communism", in an organized "Anti-Communist" network. Such activities would violate FCC regulations, which prohibit "broadcasting" (section 12.103). Code-practice and similar bulletins "solely of subject matter of direct interest to amateurs ... are permitted under section 12.106.
- Moon-Bounce. Reported that signals at 440-Mc (MHz) from a xmtr at College (*Fairbanks*), Alaska were reflected and received. Also, the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope (*England*) is running similar tests at 210-MC
- 1962, the Golden Anniversary of Amateur Radio. A lengthy article was included. It detailed the growth of Amateur Radio, following the passage by Congress of Public Law 264, in 1912, titled "An Act to Regulate Radio Communication". This law gave official status and a license to radio amateurs. Holder of the first license is still at his key, as W1ZE (*In 1962, if you believe it*).

- W3CL reported net statistics on Jan 8 (*night after the contest*). 6-mtrs, 36; 2-mtrs, 21; 220, 14. (*Not bad for 50 years ago. We don't do much better today.*)
- Smel-A-Rhat's dissertation is positive this month, applauding the members for their efforts in the absence of band openings or aurora contacts. He also notes a quantity buy is planned to get more members on 221.4 (*Culminating in a caravan to Barry's in NYC, to bring back R-48 receivers. The Transmitters (a surplus radiosonde unit) were ordered from Fair Radio, Lima Ohio*)
- SWAP SHOPPE items included an Olds Trumpet, silver and gold, with case and mutes, and a Gonset Communicator III (*Gooney Box, xtal-controlled, 2E26 output, offered by our own K3JJZ*)
- New Items. Heathkit announces the availability of a 1-kW dummy load, for \$8.95. Includes a phone jack with DC output indicating power level. Oil not included! It was noted that "Oil is stored in boxes on PE poles" (*Were we expected to **climb the poles** and pilfer some? Dubbed the "Cantenna", one of these is still in my shack.*)
- Crying Towel. At the Jan meeting, members "cried" their contest woes. (*Start of the annual crying towel meeting. The cover had a caricature of two Hams, wringing out the tears from the crying towel*). Helen included one-liners for 56 members. [Examples: "Rotator broke and beam got stuck North; 2-meter CW good for sections; Antenna must be higher, and work more bands; Noise caused by rain on power lines. Modulator blew up at 8:00pm"!] (*You'll hear some of the same excuses at this year's crying towel meeting!*). Speculation is that the club would be the winner again. (*The full listing of "cries" is available on the Club web site, by reading the posted Feb 1962 issue.*)

Thirty, de K3IUU



Cropped as best we could ... but you get the idea

...STRAYS

Hello everyone,. I'd like to remind all ARRL members that the Feb. 17th deadline is quickly approaching for you to choose the EPA Section Manager. If you lost the original ballot, you still have time to contact the league and they will send a new one out. You cannot vote on-line. It must be through snail mail. I just put mine in the mail this morning. **73s Michelle London KB3MTW**

Hello Friends, My thoughts on one of the candidates [and those of some other ARRL members that that I greatly respect] can found at the following link: [k3tuf.com / Endorsements.html](http://k3tuf.com/Endorsements.html) **73, Michael KB1JEY**

...more STRAYS

On 12/17/2011 I received a package from ARRL with **2 gavels** in it for 2011 contest performance. Unlimited club category for January and Medium club category for September 2011. Sean had the cover letter messed up and I hope to receive a corrected cover letter in time for the next Cheese Bits . -- **73 de Doc W3GAD**

....yet more STRAYS

Hey Lenny, just wanted to make a note **NN3Q/r** placed **First** in the rover class in the Atlantic Division in the September 2010 VHF contest. That would also make us #1 rover in the club for this contest. NN3Q Russ, and K3WGR AI (the other 1/2 of the two op rover team). **73 AI K3WGR**

Events

For inclusion, please direct event notices to the editor.

Trenton Computer Festival - March 10, 2012
Talks, Forums and Flea Market at The College of New Jersey. For details see <http://tcf-nj.org/index.html>

Warminster Amateur Radio Club - Trip March 22, 2012. An excursion to ARRL Headquarters. See <http://www.k3dn.org/> on the home page for details.

Warminster Amateur Radio Club - Hamfest May 6, 2012. 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

ARRL June VHF QSO Party - Contest June 9-10, 2012. The annual Camelback trek. Details to follow

CQWW VHF Contest - Contest July 21, 2012 1800Z to July 22, 2012 2100Z. See <http://www.cqww-vhf.com/> for details.

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

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 1) 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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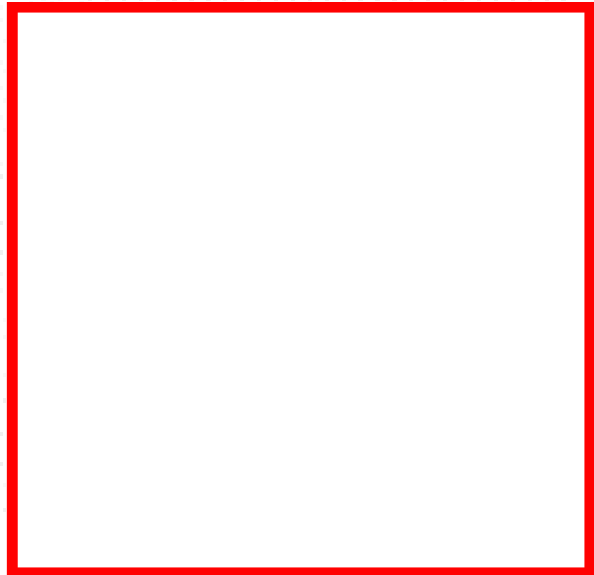
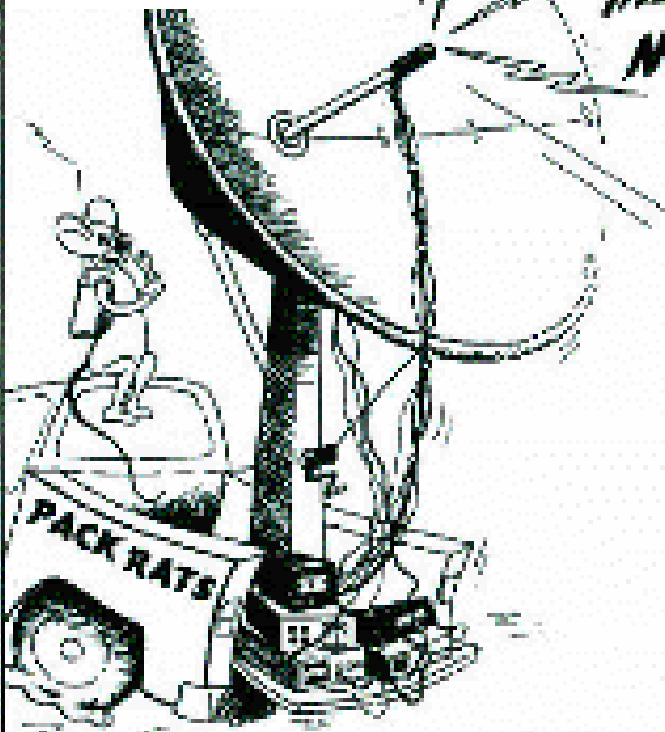
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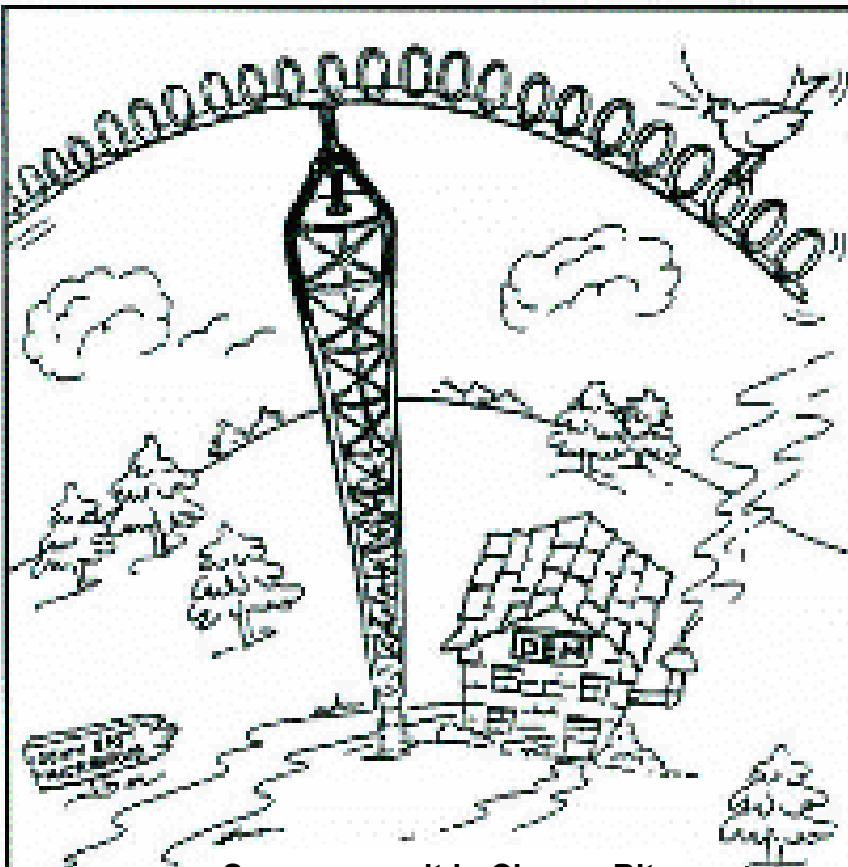
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**MEETING
NOTICE**



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