



CHEESE BITS

W3CCX
CLUB MEMORIAL CALL

ARRL
Affiliated
Club



Volume LXIII

February 2020

Number 2

PREZ
SEZ:

It's almost mid February and so far most of us have missed all the bad winter weather! I just hope we don't have to pay dearly for our good luck in the coming weeks!

In the process of developing some ideas for this "talk" I reviewed some of the recent February Cheese Bits. It was interesting to see some of our past concerns are still hanging around. The ARRL seems to be in a state of flux again. They did not renew the CEO's contract and have installed a temporary person in that position. There's got to be a good story behind that! At this years contest wrap up meeting we still talked about how the digital modes may have affected the scores - both good and bad. And last but not least, the weather again affected the contest operators north of us greatly. Those guys just can't catch a break!

I had fun in the January contest, but like many others, thought the overall activity was down. I also missed those longer contacts to the north. My 222 SSB station failed the first hour so all my 222 contacts were FM. I did use assistance, (even a few phone calls), and that did help some. But just wait till next year! I'll have more bands and etc. HI

While I'm talking about the Contest I want to thank our contest Chairman, Mike N2DEQ for all his hard work in preparing us. As you know he developed this year's strategy and documented much of it and posted it to our web site. He also

prodded us with reminders and information via the Packrat forum from time to time. Last but not least he lead the preparation presentation at the November meeting. Thanks for a great job Mike!

At the last General meeting we talked about the need for additional volunteers. We had a number of Packrats step up and take on some very necessary tasks. I thank all of you.

We had our second Camelback 2020 planning meeting January 30th via conference call. I was happy to see the number of Packrats that attended. One of the key tasks before we go to Camelback is to rebuild the way we do the 902 through 10 GHz stations. Bob W2SJ had some great ideas and he plans to work with Bruce WA3YUE, Ed WA3DRC and Paul WA3GFZ to see if we can simplify the stations so we can continue to be a 10 band + light operation at Camelback. The intent is also to mentor other Packrats to assemble and operate the stations in the years to come. Next Camelback planning meeting is February 27th via conference call. The next work party at Dover Delaware is March 7th.

This year Bob W2SJ, Ray N3RG and Mike N2DEQ have volunteered for our Election Committee. You will be contacted soon since elections are in June. Please consider running for a position on the BOD. Some of us current members are getting a little long in the tooth! This is your chance to help set the direction the Packrats will take in the next few years. Remember you can attend a BOD meeting from

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PACKRAT BEACONS - W3CCX/B

Located at FN21be except 2304 which is at FN20dh
50.080 144.300 222.062 432.290 903.072 903.3 1296.264 2304.3
3456.200 5760.3 10,368.3 MHz (red = temporarily off the air see
<https://www.packratvhf.com/index.php/on-air> for details)

MONDAY / TUESDAY NIGHT NETS

VHF/UHF Monday:

<u>TIME</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>NET CONTROL</u>
7:00 PM	224.58R MHz	WR3P FN20kb Ralph
7:30 PM	50.150 MHz	N3RG FM29ki Ray
8:00 PM	144.150 MHz	K3GNC FN20ja Jerome
8:30 PM	222.125 MHz	KB1JEY FN20je Michael
9:00 PM	432.110 MHz	WB2RVX FM29mt Mike

Microwave Tuesday:

7:30 Coordinate QSO's on 144.260 for all Microwave bands you'd like to work. Also setup Q's at w4dex.com/uhfqso or **Packrat Chat Page W3SZ.COM**
Visit the Mt Airy VHF Radio Club at: www.packratvhf.com or www.w3ccx.com

the comfort of your QTH.

I can see the January contest has taken it's toll on your work benches. I see a couple of LNAs and a power amp or two there. Better start work on them soon; the Spring Sprints aren't too far away.



Bottom line, have some fun, learn more. Build (repair) something.

73, George KA3WXV

Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club, Inc.
'The Packrats'
January 2020 VHF Sweepstakes Contest

Total Logs: 70

Club Claimed Score: 1,260,661

Here's the results of the January Sweepstakes as compiled by W3KM. How did you do? Check it out below. Each frequency cell shows Q's and Grids for that frequency. What can you do to improve for next year? Start planning soon!

Nr	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	47 GHz	Laser
1	K2EZ/R	387	121	111199	64 18	87 22	64 16	62 16	45 11	46 10	16 7	3 2					
2	K1RZ	370	113	85767	74 17	119 33	54 17	55 17	27 11	22 7	9 5	1 1	2 2	7 3			
3	WA3NUF	399	83	59428	134 22	116 26	46 9	51 7	15 4	21 6	8 4	6 3	1 1	1 1			
4	WA3DRC	282	75	46425	110 32	61 17	29 5	21 5	16 3	19 4	7 1	8 2	4 2	6 3			1 1
5	WB2RVX	315	63	40887	136 25	47 8	30 5	43 6	17 4	21 4	4 2	5 2	6 3	4 3			2 1
6	AA2UK	278	78	36426	110 32	81 27	22 5	30 5	11 3	16 3	8 3						
7	N3RG	231	79	35471	78 21	71 22	26 10	24 7	4 3	10 3	3 2	4 3	6 4	4 3			1 1
8	W2SJ	282	51	33609	81 12	56 10	37 6	42 6	18 4	23 5	16 4	7 3					2 1
9	KC2TN	337	66	33330	127 25	110 26	30 4	40 4	11 3	17 2	1 1						1 1
10	WC2K	316	77	32109	79 22	136 28	44 12	57 15									
11	WA3GFZ	279	55	29150	88 16	64 10	41 6	44 6	17 5	15 5	5 3	3 2	1 1	1 1			
12	KR1ST	290	78	27612	133 39	93 24	29 7	35 8									
13	W3ICC/R	247	48	24432	45 9	76 10	49 8	39 7		23 5	15 4						
14	WA2OMY	255	44	23892	86 17	57 8	32 2	32 4	13 3	15 3	10 3	6 2	4 2				
15	W2KV	275	60	20280	79 17	133 31		63 12									
16	W2BVH	189	56	19264	57 14	63 16	17 6	21 7	9 4	16 5	6 4						
17	W3GAD	244	44	18964	73 13	62 15	33 5	39 4	18 3	18 3							1 1
18	WA2FGK	261	64	16704	261 64												
19	WA3QPX	219	63	15813	127 29	68 22	8 4	12 6	2 1	2 1							
20	NN3Q/R	152	33	15213	16 4	39 5	22 4	23 4	12 3	13 3	7 1	4 1	6 1	9 1		1 1	
21	KA3FQS	208	37	14911	32 4	61 11	41 7	42 7	13 3	15 3		3 1					1 1
22	K0BAK/R	123	28	11424	44 6	12 2	10 2	8 2	9 2	10 2	8 2	7 2	4 2	2 2			9 2
23	K2TXB	193	59	11387	77 23	116 36											
24	W3SZ	92	45	11250	23 8	27 9	8 4	8 4	5 4	5 4	3 3	5 4	3 2	5 3			
25	KA2LIM	123	59	10207	29 14	44 18	21 12	29 15									
26	K3GNC	149	36	8496	27 2	65 17	16 6	26 6		15 5							
27	K3MD	-	-	8415													
28	N2DEQ	185	30	8340	60 9	60 7	24 5	27 4	8 3	6 2							
29	WX3K	134	44	7304	71 22	31 10	15 6	17 6									
30	K3JJZ	169	25	6900	54 5	44 5	26 5	33 4	8 2	1 1	1 1	1 1					1 1
31	WA3YUE	120	31	6665	42 12	29 7	17 5	15 2	8 2	6 2	3 1						
32	KC3BVL	147	25	6650	44 6	38 8	23 4	25 3		12 2	5 2						
33	W3HMS	120	40	6480	74 20	24 8	7 3	7 3	4 3	3 2				1 1			
34	K1DS	168	26	6474	68 10	37 5	25 4	29 5		9 2							
35	K2WB	153	28	5432	62 12	50 10	15 2	26 4									

Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club, Inc.

`The Packrats`

January 2020 VHF Sweepstakes Contest (cont'd)

Total Logs: 70

Club Claimed Score : 1,260,661

Nr	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	47 GHz	Laser
36	K1JT	150	36	5400	150 36												
37	W3KM	135	27	4887	85 19	4 1	18 2	28 5									
38	WB3IGR	85	34	4182	26 7	37 14	9 5	7 3	5 4								1 1
39	K3GM	113	32	4064	70 20	29 10	14 2										
40	KB3MTW	150	15	3705	46 4	39 3	26 2	23 2	9 2	7 2							
41	KB1JEY	152	15	3390	51 4	39 3	26 3	32 2		3 2							1 1
42	KA3WXV	125	20	3380	39 6	42 7	17 2	27 5									
43	K3TUF	91	30	3180	45 12	33 9	5 3	7 5		1 1							
44	K3SFX	88	21	2331	23 5	42 9		23 7									
45	N2CG	94	23	2162	94 23												
46	W9KXI	50	33	2079	14 11	23 13	6 4	7 5									
47	WA3NFV	117	12	1860	30 4	49 4	18 2	20 2									
48	WA3JZN	82	22	1804	72 17	10 5											
49	K3VEQ	94	13	1469	35 6	40 4	5 1	14 2									
50	K3MF	73	20	1460	73 20												
51	K1DS/R	52	12	1164	7 1	18 4	12 2	12 2									3 1
52	N1XKT	77	8	912	20 2	20 2	19 2	18 2									
53	NE3I	67	9	765	26 4	23 3	8 1	10 1									
54	N1XKT/R	42	12	588	15 3	20 4		7 3									
55	WF3W	45	10	560	24 3	12 3		8 3		1 1							
56	K2UYH	17	12	540		7 2		1 1		9 9							
57	WB2ONA	41	10	430	15 3	24 6		2 1									
58	K3BPP	19	13	312	4 3	10 6		5 4									
59	WA3RLT	21	9	225	7 4	10 3		4 2									
60	K3BFS	15	4	80		10 3	5 1										
61	N3ITT	13	4	72		8 3	5 1										
62	K3IUV	7	3	33		3 1	3 1	1 1									
63	KB3SIG	2	1	16													2 1
64	WA3WUL	1	1	8													1 1
65	K3EGE	1	1	8													1 1
66	KU3A	1	1	1		1 1											
67	K3MD	-	-														
68																	
69																	
70																	
71																	

Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club, Inc.
`The Pack Rats`
January 2020 VHF Sweepstakes Contest (cont'd)

Multi-OPS

Nr	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	24G Hz	47 GHz	La-ser
1	N3NGE	851	188	285196	286 57	245 43	99 24	124 28	29 12	30 7	20 6		9 5	6 4		1 1	2 1
OPS N3NGE K9PW WA3WUL K3EGE K1WHS N3EXA																	
2	N2NT	704	143	121693	283 56	274 45	67 21	80 21									
OPS N2NT N2NC WW2Y																	
3	W0RSJ	288	61	28426	123 23	79 17	25 5	29 7	13 3	12 3	5 2	2 1					
OPS W0RSJ W1PV																	
4	WA3EHD	275	48	25872	90 17	61 13	37 4	41 4	16 3	18 3	10 3						2 1
OPS WA3EHD KB3SIG																	

Mt. Airy VHF Radio Club
January VHF SS
Previous Aggregate Claimed Scores

Year	Logs Submitted	Score
2020	70	1,260,661
2019	71	1,138,372
2018	60	1,911,495
2017	65	1,998,637
2016	70	2,238,450
2015	68	2,065,073
2014	68	2,277,747
2013	65	2,659,242
2012	77	2,491,702
2011	67	2,156,784
2010	70	2,699,809

Previous Aggregate Claimed Scores
(Continued)

Year	Logs Submitted	Score
2009	58	1,891,225
2008	63	2,232,731
2007	63	2,055,259
2006	57	2,724,560
2005	53	1,459,052
2004	56	2,856,837
2003	61	3,127,678
2002	49	2,113,624

Mt Airy VHF Radio Club Current + Previous 6 Years Scores by Station

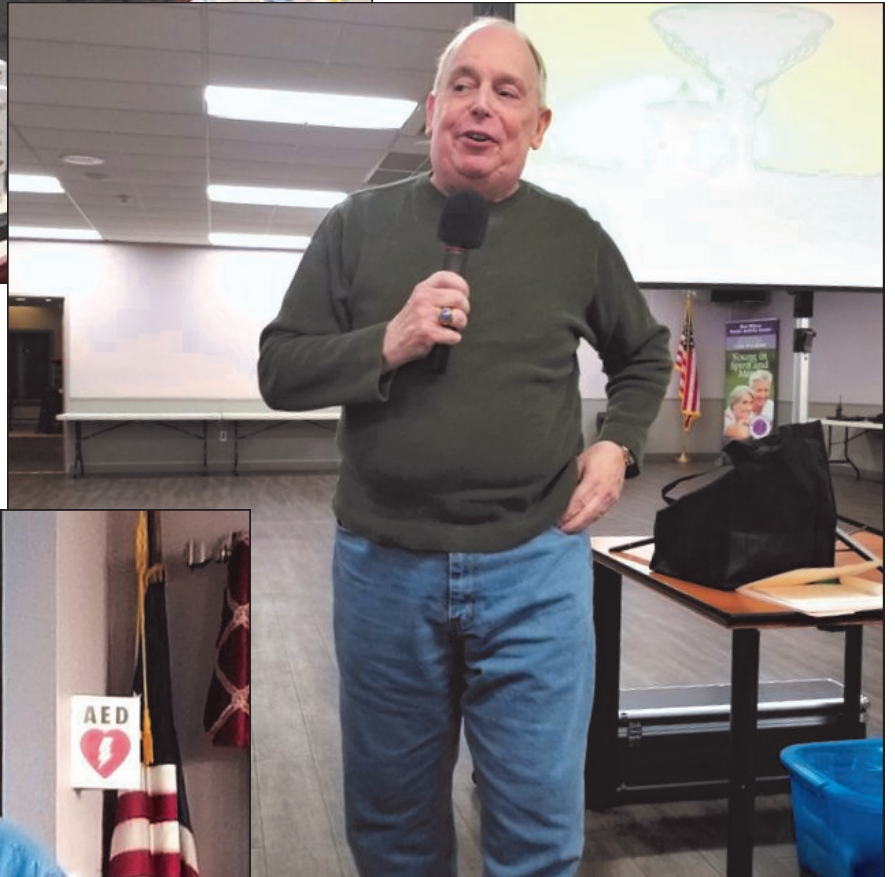
CALL	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
K2EZ/R	111199						
K1RZ	85767	124540	316470	201684			
WA3NUF	59428	49632	5712	90902	116730	123156	118085
WA3DRC	46425	57868	55407	58880	59160	59218	68839
WB2RVX	40887	21935	49593		162064	230356	203592
AA2UK	36426	9570	45900	16638	280		
N3RG	35471	75440	115062	90200	108676	108070	78800
W2SJ	33609	21156	50556	14945	51179	27816	17520
KC2TN	33330	17289	33428	13962	30186	35904	37855
WC2K	32109						
WA3GFZ	29150	23453	50386	41608	72504	67375	75768
KR1ST	27612	5985					
W3ICC/R	24432	10920	20727	30549	28858	10428	
WA2OMY	23892	16992		25929	19565	28620	44347
W2KV	20280	21505	5848	28420			
W2BVH	19264	10647	23142	25592	10730	9792	18432
W3GAD	18964	10908	10461	19424	52	12258	30576
WA2FGK	16704		4797	2550	42672	21016	184426
WA3QPX	15813	13650		30415	31878	33128	54366
NN3Q/R	15213	-	57525	66177	96448	71565	76096
KA3FQS	14911	17696	14630	19795	18648	21868	3859
K0BAK/R	11424	5565	33626	25921	30240	6480	
K2TXB	11387	17020			3496	3674	1106
W3SZ	11250	79856	27048	52206	111213	45784	33480
KA2LIM	10207	4095					
K3GNC	8496	14079	7380	47804	48977	38254	26826
K3MD	8415	6204		26979	20160	21513	12744
N2DEQ	8340	4840	4200	5050	3420	3080	3500
WX3K	7304	-	5439				
K3JJZ	6900	7944	8618	13299	14689	5112	11296
WA3YUE	6665	6960	9144	14315	10444		16296
KC3BVL	6650	4600					
W3HMS	6480	3360	72	7740	6112	4669	6464
K1DS	6474		8033	1862	748	2520	
K2WB	5432	1190	1498		2755	3220	

Mt Airy VHF Radio Club Current + Previous 6 Years Scores by Station (cont'd)

Call	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
K1JT	5400	13068	4898	988	5612	13188	16714
W3KM	4887	8388	15839	12012	20163	8613	11016
WB3IGR	4182	3432	4958	5056	1449	14681	22168
K3GM	4064						
KB3MTW	3705	5232		6912	8000	6780	4466
KB1JEY	3390	5112	4400	3584	7748	7300	6573
KA3WXV	3380	3344	5300	6175	5208	5400	3043
K3TUF	3180	10461	117762	157505	219675	132582	229330
K3SFX	2331	7008					
N2CG	2162	96					
W9KXI	2079	5418					
WA3NFV	1860			2340	3689	1507	
WA3JZN	1804	1200	2772		1904		
K3VEQ	1469	632	1558	1710	2550	2227	3591
K3MF	1460			2100	5250	2	
K1DS/R	1164		1764	76373	52368	87497	
N1XKT	912	2106		2560	4182	2171	
NE3I	765	768	384	1188	490	2247	27
N1XKT/R	588						
WF3W	560						
K2UYH	540			260	72		
WB2ONA	430	100			24	144	
K3BPP	312	600	1056	1050	624	576	756
WA3RLT	225	1905	4725	4818	4968	3116	1110
K3BFS	80	70	140	78	228	448	222
N3ITT	72	4810					27200
K3IUU	33	2394	1778			744	3553
KB3SIG	16	16					
WA3WUL	8	8	16		8	16	24
K3EGE	8	52	160	730	36	784	
KU3A	1				102		216
MULTIOP							
N3NGE	285196	220704	490154	441350	496386	507726	541680
N2NT	121693	118956	142742				
WORSJ	28426		27218	29341	55480	35700	28408
WA3EHD	25872	19635	18848	41160	40866	41256	34680

January Meeting Pics







Pix by K3JJZ & W3GAD

Packrat January Contest Reports

From Russ K2TXB

Hi all. Here are my contest results: Except for several hours of iced up antennas on 2 meters, the contest went well for me. Six meters continued to work through the icing – hard to detune a gamma match, hi hi. Six meters: Highlight was an E opening to Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi on Saturday afternoon. Did not time it but think it lasted for at least 2 hours. Ended up with 76 Q's and 21 grids in the log (plus 4 dupes). Two meters: Moon was not in a good place for this contest so only a couple of hours for EME this time. Made 4 contacts and got 3 new grids that way. Otherwise it was just pushing the propagation gods for distance and Q's. Ended up with 120 Q's and 35 grids in log (plus 6 dupes). Not sure what it is with all the dupes this year – some guys just kept calling me over and over. It was easier to just work them again than to explain that we had already worked. A highlight was working KM1CC in FN51 – don't hear that one very often! Years ago, I operated portable up in FN51 during the August UHF contest and made a bunch of contacts on 432 and 1296 from there. I remember calling my friend Roger, K2SMN, on 1296 and he said, "It really is you"! Also worked rovers on EN91 and EN92 on 2 – that was nice. Got two contacts into FN02 which is a bit rare these days since W2DRZ is off the air. I worked some SSB but found it more efficient to just pound away on FT8, MSK441, or JT65 (EME). Worked 25 on 2M and just two on 6M, with SSB. I had a lot of QRM on 2. It seemed like there was some kind of mixing going on that beat with all the really strong stations (like 40 over 9 or more) and I would hear them sounding very buzzy across the band. It was worse if I turned on the noise blanker, of course. That was another reason why FT8 was better for me. So, totals are $196 \times 2 \times 56 = 21952$. Had a good time working everyone and hope to do it again next year with a better station here.

From Bert K3IUW

The morning after. Survived another one. My 61st Jan VHF contest. First one as a Rat was 1960. Health issues kept me from using anything except for

a couple of walkies in the kitchen! But I managed a few contacts, on 3 bands. Disappointed I never heard or worked Michelle who is just a few miles away. Not sure if she ever popped on to FM. I had hoped to use the FT-817 on 6 and 2 ssb (with a whip antenna), but when I fired it up in the kitchen, it had no output. Receive was fine, but no xmit. I did "hear" a number of ssb stations (and a lot of "buzz" on the FT8 freq), but that didn't help me. So my contribution was 7Q's 3 Grids, 33 Pts.

From Herb K2LNS (WA2FGK)

I had a free weekend and decided to put an effort into this weekend VHF contest. As in years past, it's a 50/50 chance of getting through the weekend due to winter icing. The big difference is I only now have 6 meters instead of a 10 band system. Certainly makes life easier going into my later years. Saturday late afternoon, the band erratically open to the south, and Sunday late afternoon to the mid-west. Pre contest I set a goal of 50 grids for the weekend. I knew I would have to work a decent amount of stations using meteors with MSK144. I was disappointed in the meteor activity, although those worked certainly helped my totals. Most of my contacts were done on FT8, other than the beginning of the contest. I do have one complaint to the VHF community. When the band opens for an hour or two, get off of FT8. Several times I moved to SSB during small openings, and never saw a signal. I can work 3 stations on SSB, vs. the time it takes to make one FT8 contact. It's a great mode, but certainly slower than SSB. Within the last week, I down loaded FT8 v2.1.2. Over the weekend, some contacts were lost, due to compatibility. I did learn to click RRR which would be read by the other ops program, so we could complete the contact. I'm sure those who gave up from repetitive transmissions, thought I was an idiot. Thanks for the fun. Thanks for the Q's. QSO's 261 Grids 64 = 16,700

From Griff NE3I

In an effort to contribute to the Club effort, I strapped together simple dipole antennas and a 222 HB Ground Plane on a fiberglass push up pole over the deck. In the first hour, I worked 25 Qs on 4 Bands with low power and then had to break down for a social event. Sunday morning began with enthusiastic commitment but, high

winds and RF sound card Issues, (apparently from the temporary antennas), necessitated resorting to the A99 Vertical for 6 and the garage attic 2M Squalo, Single Full Wave Horizontal 432 Loop and a Tri-Band J Pole. I worked anyone that I could including, at least 20 Packrats, with some of whom I was able to "Run the Bands." Woo Hoo! Thanks for the Qs. Q's 67, Grids 9, Pts 756.

From Drex / Paul W3ICC/R

This contest was sure an adventure; with fun you can't get from any other kind of activity, in spite of more technical challenges than usual. BUT, I pity the ham who has to go to work on Monday. Any of you experience contest hangover? Some are fortunate to work where MLK is recognized as a holiday, and I'm retired. Our roving yielded 23K even with lost time from software resets, intermittent coax, ice, and more ice, broken driven elements, and sticky relays. Any rove goes better with a partner, and I'm blessed to have W2PED as a partner. I can't thank Paul enough for his heavy lifting and friendship. Many thanks to you Packrats as well for your patience and persistence working our rover. The to-do list is long, but I'm looking forward to the next rove.

From Stephanie WX3K

I finally had a moment to sit down with N1MM and go through my entire log and submit it to HQ. My final score: 7304 134 Q's 44 Grids for my lower 4 bands. **Best score to date** for my January efforts. I experienced some minor problems with the antenna system which did not take me off the air this year. Yea! Temps here in the southern Poconos were a bit colder so the snow didn't stick to the elements. FT8 capability on 2 meters really helped do some further reaching for me. The TS2000X worked great! Really like that rig. It even sounds WONDERFUL on AM.

From Dave K1RZ

Almost always I can say that a contest was a good time. This time though freezing rain started about 30 minutes before the contest started and spread across the region. It made it difficult for the rovers. The icing changed antenna patterns and made difficult loading for amplifiers and radios trying to feed power into these antennas. After about 3.5 hours into the contest I noticed that some antennas seemed to be working better off the back of the antenna. On higher bands the effects were more

obvious. So after working Andrea K2EZ/R, one grid away, very weakly on the bottom three bands and not at all on 432 MHz, it was obvious that there wasn't much point in staying on during such difficult conditions, given that freezing rain was still falling and the temperature was 27 degrees F. Back in the shack at 0630 local time the temperature had increased to 37 degrees but 432 and 1296 antennas exhibited high SWR that was too high for safe amplifier operation. And the 50 MHz amplifier could not be coaxed to put out any power. I operated the rest of the day and made all the contacts I could given that every other band was impacted by the freezing rain of Saturday. Band conditions improved on Sunday to the best that could be expected on a cold and windy day in January. Not too good. Through the weekend Rovers were out and I logged W2RMA/R, N9ZL/R, W3ICC/R, NN3Q/R, N2SLN/R, KF2MR/R, K2EZ/R (Andrea continuing across the country to Oklahoma for her personal best score to date), K1DS/R and VE3OIL/R (worked on 144 FT8 in EN82). Thanks to all of you for getting on and going out under these arduous conditions. To the many contesters right here in Maryland, Virginia, Southern New Jersey and Pennsylvania hold onto the point that June is coming. Me too. Can't wait for the June contest and the Spring Sprints -- and leaving all this ice behind. Thanks to ARRL for sponsoring this awesome event. Thanks to everyone who got on and who took the time to work me.

From Michael KB1JEY

As you may know, I have a part-time job that involves some work on weekends. I was only able to contest from about noon on Sunday through the contest end. Because I knew that my hours would be limited, I decided not to use FT8. I think that FT8 is a boon for weak-signal VHF contesting (thank you Joe !!!) and can help generate QSOs with distant grids. Given my limited operating hours in 2020, I knew that I could fill those hours with phone contacts with Packrats and other local hams, which for me is more interesting. I operated on 6 bands (the lower 4 plus 1296 MHz and laser). I made 152 QSOs in 15 grids for 3,390 points. Bill AA2UK was kind enough to lend me his ICOM IC-1271 1296 transceiver. I hooked it up to a log periodic antenna on my tower via 140 feet of ½ inch Heliac and through a 60 watt DEMI amplifier. The result was that I could make some

local QSOs but my effective range was limited. I did manage a straight-key 1296 MHz CW QSO with Mike WB2RVX, one of my personal highlights of the contest. I did try to set up some Sunday skeds but was not successful in this effort. My greatest surprise was that I missed connecting with several local Packrats whom I typically log in the January contest. I did post my 6 meter CQ frequency on Slack a few times and made a few cellphone calls. Why this result? In the case of one local ham, I noticed that his calling frequency posted to Slack was one used for FT8. All I can say is I was there for the picking. 51 hams found me on 6 meters. Qs 152, Grids 15, Pts 3390. Mr. Drake supervised my contest operation.



From Wayde K3MF

Was not going to participate because the tower has been stripped of VHF/UHF antennas because I am using it as a support for a MF 630m Inv L, but I was unable to transmit on 630m Saturday because of the ice build up. The antenna is a 60 ft. high 400 ft. long Inv L so I decided to jump out the loading coil and feed it directly to the TS-2000x. The internal

tuner tuned so I figured lets go. I was able to work about 30 stations first night including down into Florida. The antenna worked but had a sharp N/S pattern due to the fact the horizontal section runs N/S. So the next morning after the ice melted away I built a rotating dipole and had it up about 10 ft. Now I could at least get some directivity by rotating it. Sunday eve signals from the west (EN40, EM59, EM69 and EM38) started rolling in and I even had them answer my CQ's. I ran FT8 the whole time. Worked 73 stations with a total of 20 grids. Was using a TS-2000x running 100 watts output.

From Paul WA3QPX

No snow here just flurries and high wind. Retracted both towers Saturday and put them back up Sunday making it difficult for micros on Saturday. I had FT8 running with Flex 6000 on the lower four. I saw increased activity on FT8 on 6 and 2. There was little FT8 activity on 2 last year. I did work a few stations FT8 on 432.174. Nothing on 222.174. SSB activity seemed to be up also with Packrats chat really helping all modes. I only caught a little of the 6M opening Saturday. I lost two hours operating time late Saturday due to what I thought was a computer problem. Deleting the program and reinstalling, trying to get 222 to work. At 1 AM I found the problem. I had turned the 222 transverter off due to fan noise! 219 Q 63 Grids Score 15813. By the way, Ray N3RG missed half the contest due to rotator failure and still did better than me due to micro points and grids. I expect to see more activity next year with the introduction of triband vhf/uhf version of Icom 7300 (IC9700). Next year I'll have more power on the micros.

From Doc W3GAD

Off to a good start within minutes of the opening bell. Good start using SSB and after 2 hours went to FT8 for a couple of hours before breaking for supper. At that point I started looking for Packrats to fill in my log with some success, but the weather, icing etc. slowed that. In reviewing my logs I think staying in SSB would have been more beneficial making contacts and running the bands as often as possible to build a better overall score. FT8 really helped on 2 meter grids and also added a few really good grids on 6. I did not try FT8 above 2 meters. As the contest progressed I made additional tweaks to the FT8 setup and they all

seemed to aid in completing contacts for this station but the contacts seemed to be very slow to completion. "WAIT UNTIL JUNE"

From Rick K1DS / K1DS/R

BRrrr. Considering the wx I used Saturday to work as a fixed station using the TS2000x and IC375A from the attic of my daughter's home. With only a 20A switching supply, I cut power to 80W on 6&2, used 50W on 432, 10W on 1296 and 30W on 222. With the omni 6M antenna and small Yagi in the attic, I managed to make 6,000+ points. I had to stop 2M as it was causing direct rectification thru the house audio system and once it was grandchildren's bedtime, it had to go. I managed several FT8 QSOs and even got a point with a FLORIDA station using the Omni in the attic. I was going to go to N3NGE Sunday but they remained with a full crew so I roved the two local grids with the FT100D & 223FM, adding another log with 1000+ points. It was wildly windy and the tripod blew over several times. I put the 6m antenna on the ground and it still made a few QSOS. Many thanks to my son & other club members (Michael, Nick, Michelle, Leon) who provided gear and help to enable my operation here. We only flew up from FL for the long weekend. The Hertz Chrysler rental van was the right size for the rigs and antennas and had both a 150W AC outlet and a 13A 12VDC outlet plus the usual 5v USB. Thanks also to you all for being on the air and in my logs. CU in June.

From Ken KA2LIM

I elected to operate the Jan VHF contest from the comfort of my home station and glad I did because of the snow and cold here in FN12nf. I ran the bottom four bands on CW and SSB. Needless to say the band conditions were really poor here on Saturday but did improve some on Sunday. Saturday afternoon while listening for a station just SW of Rochester, NY in FN03 on 6M, I am pointed into the hills one half mile away, that are 600' higher than I am and the next row of hills behind those are another 300' higher than the first ones, I could not hear that station. Having 3 - 6M antennas here at home, had all three pointed in that direction, I started changing the antenna switch. Nothing on the 1st 7 element beam, nothing on #2 – an 11 element beam, switched to beam #3 – an another 7 element beam and "bam" there they were at S9+10. Worked them for band

#4. Nice to have "lots of tools in the tool box". I was able to work most all stations on 50 thru 432 that had like bands. There was only one small hiccup on Sunday when my IF radio for 222 suddenly stopped making any power out when running WX3K. Quickly swapped that radio out for the back-up unit and I was back up and going. Total down time was about 10 minutes. I called Stephanie on the phone and we completed the



222 contact for the 4th band. **Not many stations heard or worked to my SE.** Early Sunday evening I got a phone call from Warren – WB2ONA saying that he could hear me on 2M but could not get my attention as he was using a halo and low power. Warren asked me if I had worked or heard WB2CUT – Rich. I no more than said no when I heard Rich come up out of the noise; quickly made the exchange and went back to listening for Warren. We wound up making the contact the microwave way by sending dashes to zero beat on each other and then made the contact via CW. I worked stations farther away than Warren but that was the highlight of the evening contacts considering 1) my location 2) poor band conditions 3). a halo antenna and low power on the other end. I wound up with a total of 124 Q's with 59 multipliers for a raw score of 10266. **Best of all: I HAD FUN**

From Warren WB2ONA

Lenny, Good to work you in the contest. Turns out we could have worked on 432. When I tried using the 2 meter omni I did make a few 432 contacts. I was surprised with a few of the Packrats that I worked and disappointed with the many that I never heard so I didn't have a chance to work them. Heard K1RZ several times but never worked him. Jeff, K1TEO, was loud here. This tells me that there were a lot of stations to the north and north east that I should have been able to work, if they

pointed their antennas this way. I was able to work KA2LIM on 2M using cw but neither one of us heard anything on 6M. Heard Michael, KB1JEY, after 10 PM and worked him on 6M and 2M. Worked W3ICC/R in 2 grids towards the end of the contest.

From Lenny W2BVH

This was a fun contest. There were some interesting challenges too but maybe that's part of the fun? I listened to Mike, N2DEQ and made a bunch of Packrat skeds in advance - 4 full skeds with day, time and frequency and 6 other "I'll call you on the landline some time Sunday afternoon" type skeds. All of them worked out great. Since we agreed in advance, it was not problem doing complete runs (up to 2.3GHz where available) with all of them. There were also some interesting "problems" that cropped up during the contest: 1) There were lots of dupes while working FT8. I was called many times by folks who didn't realize they already worked me. In most cases I abandoned the QSO in the middle to avoid the dupe 2) Like some other Packrats, I experienced continuous cycles of the same exchanges in the middle of some FT8 QSO's. I manually completed as many QSO's as I could, but I'm not sure why these things happened. And I'm not sure how many of them will end up being busted Q's. 3) My FT8 transmissions on 2M were going out as 2 (or sometimes 3) simultaneous signals separated in frequency by multiples of 60 Hz. I asked Joe KC2TN to look at my signal on his bandscope and he emailed me pictures. This obviously has something to do with AC line frequency getting in to my FT8 audio and mixing with it. Interestingly each of the signals were clean and easily decoded. There are plenty of other folks talking about this on the Internet. I'll have to track this down somehow. 4) Like a lot of others, I had trouble with ice on the antennas on Saturday. When my brand new (homebrew) 432 power amp tripped on SWR I figured better safe than sorry and shut down all bands except 2M. (I've got a tube amp on 2M and it's pretty forgiving of mismatches). As always, there were also some pleasant surprises that cropped up during the contest. I did a run with Bill AA2UK. When we ran all but 902, he said that band wasn't worth trying since he only had 5 watts. I said, well nothing ventured nothing gained lets give it a shot. After he located my signal (with dashes), I sent my half and then listened for a good 10-20 seconds for him, with nothing but noise

in the headphones. I was thinking well that's the end of that, and then all of a sudden, his signal popped up, was clearly audible, and stayed that way for the whole rest of his half of the QSO, including multiple repeats of his grid and call! Nothing ventured, nothing gained indeed! The next surprise was a run with W3ICC/R when they were in Colts Neck. When we got to the 2.3 GHz Q, Drex was S8 (!) almost the whole time. When I tried 2.3 GHz with them months earlier from that spot, when they were scouting out new locations, their signal was copyable but more like S1 or S2. The last pleasant surprise was a call on the phone from W3ICC/R requesting a QSO when they were in Sandy Hook. When was the last time you got a phone call from a rover asking you for a QSO? In my case it was never. Drex/Paul and I have no problem with full runs through 2.3 GHz when they're at Sandy Hook and this time it was no different! Finally I'd like to mention an idea I've been thinking about, for which I have no answer. I wonder if there is a way to be able to arrange band runs on the fly using FT8. Nothing comes to mind, but it would be exciting do 2, 3 or even 4 bands sequentially with some weak DX stations during a contest. Anyway, like all January 'tests, it was

exhausting but a lot of fun. Results: 189 Q's, 56 Grids, 19264 Pts.



Warren WB2ONA on my roof the Tuesday before the contest, hanging a new (used) 55-el 1296 looper. Thanks Warren! (And thanks Len N3NGE for the antenna).

January Contest Wrap-up Meeting Pics



K2EZ/R Contest Report

Due to the weather I started further west so not all my planned first grid sked partners were still good candidates. I would have tried all anyway but I only got half way thru my list before running out of time. Conditions and location, plus ice gathering on the antennas made everyone I tried difficult. My apologies to everyone I didn't get to.

This was my first **serious** effort as a classic rover. I had run two other contests in the classic division with six bands, but I was really feeling my way with the micros along with the VHF and UHF bands. This contest I had eight bands and an ambitious plan to hit 25 to 28 grids starting in Pennsylvania and finishing in Oklahoma.

I did make it to Oklahoma but due to snow in Pennsylvania, and slow travel in the weather, I had to chop off four planned grids then bypass two optional grids. Given I traversed some grids very late at night, I failed to activate them. As a result, I only activated a total of 19 grids.

My final score was 111,199 points, but since most of the Qs and mults were outside Packrats territory, the 60 Qs within Packrats territory only come to 3,296 points.

CQ activity on SSB and CW seems to continue to decline. After the first couple hours I heard almost none till the last couple hours when I was approaching Tulsa Oklahoma. I called CQ on 6m and 2m using SSB quite frequently but with very little result. Not counting the first two hours and what I worked approaching Tulsa, I worked no more than a dozen stations on SSB/CW.

It makes one wonder what potential newcomers to weak signal, and specifically roving, are going to think when they can't find anyone on the band. Or will it become like EME where JT65 is the norm and only a few ops bother with CW anymore? It seems like soon FT8 (and perhaps MSK144) will be presumed and few will venture to other modes.

As an established rover, I know many of the players in the areas I rove and have a fairly large contact list. I know the other tools which can be used to find other stations and set up skeds in real time. I've given talks on roving and have seen people get excited about getting out. How are these newcomers going to find out who is out there? Or will they have to jump right into digital modes with all the headaches unique to mobile and in the car use?

I got into roving on a lark. I knew a VHF contest was on when I was starting a road trip so I put VHF equipment for it in the car not expecting much. If I had encountered the sort or dead air during that contest in 2015 that I saw this contest, I probably would have written off the idea as uninteresting.

The SSB/CW activity was so sparse that during my 1600+ mile run I had more un-scheduled/un-solicited contacts on FM than I had on SSB and CW combined!

Speaking of FM, John KM4KMU was just lighting up the airwaves on FM in Northern Virginia. I heard many other stations and some idle conversation on FM while passing thru that area. John's activity seemed to bring out others. It reminded me of how it used to be on SSB before the rule changes put a premium on skeds arranged in real time and before FT8 shifted operating patterns to digital. It also occurred to me that it isn't so surprising to have found more phone activity in FM since the FMers don't have the option of using FT8.

On the subject of FT8, I have FT8 capability on 6m which is about as much as I can do in motion. This contest, FT8 completely failed me. At the start of the contest, my GPS dongle wouldn't lock onto satellites and thus I couldn't get an accurate time sync. When I finally got out of the storm, my 6m antenna had

developed an intermittent connection. That connection issue didn't seem to interfere with SSB or CW operation. The rig complained when the SWR glitched, but it worked. On FT8 I was pretty much unable to copy stations. I infrequently got a decode and nobody would copy me. At one stop I got out and banged the antenna which temporarily resolved the connection issue. I suddenly started coping FT8 and worked a couple stations. Unfortunately, when I got moving again, it wasn't long before a bump caused it to get intermittent again. I worked only 2 or 3 contacts on FT8 in the entire contest. All were during that brief period.

With so few stations CQing on SSB and CW, and FT8 not working, I pretty much had to fall back on my telephone sked list. It is just horrible seeing my VHF/UHF/Microwave universe shrink to the contacts in my phone. I suppose I need to get to automating FT8 so I can operate it and drive at the same time. I have a way to meet the ARRL's new requirement for contacts to be "contemporaneously" manually initiated. On that subject, I wonder how many are aware of that rule change, and that it potentially prohibits use of the "Answer 1st" checkbox since that could automatically complete a contact well after the initiation of a CQ.

Memphis TN continues to be a highlight of these long runs. A nice hotbed of activity. Unfortunately I had to chop off the two grids on the south side of Memphis and only activate the two I was passing thru. By the time I hit Memphis I was running out of time to get to Oklahoma.

Working Steve AG4V/R was a pleasant surprise. I had hoped to at least work him from Memphis grids again like the last time I came thru, but it got better. He decided to come East from Memphis while I was going West towards Memphis. We were able to connect for a few grid combinations. This is when having more bands paid off since Steve had all the bands I had. I made my first 3456 MHz QSOs with him. At one point I passed him while he was stopped on the other side of the road. Steve said he tried to take a photo as I passed but somehow only got a red car instead of me. Apparently, I was driving too fast to capture!! When I got to Oklahoma I joined up with N0LD/R and K5SRT/R and we had some fun to cap off the contest.

A couple lessons learned in this rove:

1) It is quite practical to operate the microwave bands I was carrying (33cm, 23cm, 13cm and 9cm) while in motion. I had noted that the 6ft yagis on these bands were very tight compared to the lower frequencies. I believed it was too tight to use while moving. It turns out that it is quite possible. It depends on the roads however, and local obstructions. It worked very well getting W5VY/R who was a good distance away. The highway in that part of Arkansas was a bit elevated from the surrounding area.

2) At highway speeds, if I rotate the yagis from pointing forward to the side perhaps 50% of the time, it adds enough additional drag to cost me two to two and a half more miles per gallon. Stowed forward it cost me 5 mpg from what I got with no antennas. In the contest it cost me 7 to 7 1/2 mpg. Net mpg was down to 12.5 mpg. When I drove from Oklahoma to Texas the next day and kept the antennas pointed forward fuel economy was back up to 15 mpg. A few stats from this rove: Roughly 3 Qs per gallon of fuel, 85 cents of fuel per Q, 4.1 miles per Q.

--73, Andrea K2EZ

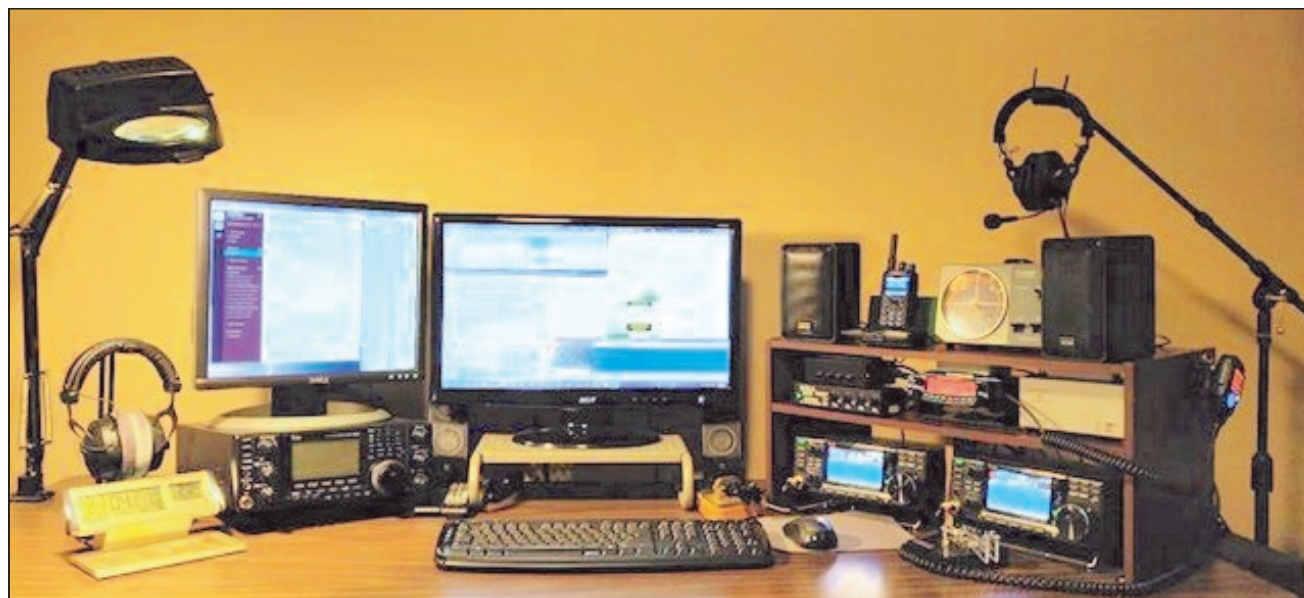


January 2020 ARRL VHF Contest Notes

-- by Alex KR1ST

That was great fun! This was easily my best January VHF contest ever with 290 QSO's and a claimed score of 27,612 points. I more than quadrupled my score from last year, but that's easy to do when your antennas don't freeze up and you add a band that gives you 2 points for each Q. I was on pins and needles for a while because the forecast kept mentioning the same dreaded two words, wintry mix, every time I checked. In the weeks leading up to the contest my antennas had frozen three times and that made operation impossible for 4 weeks due to the infamous "wintry mix". We did get about 5" of snow, but that doesn't seem to scare my antennas.

I'm happy with the 9700/7300 combination for VHF contesting. I wish the bandscope had a higher resolution, though. You really do have to tune around or else you may miss some weaker stations that do not register on the bandscope. I did not have that problem with the IC-9100 to which I added my own bandscopes (3) based on the Raspberry Pi and the Gqrx software. The only problem I experienced is that N1MM+ logs the wrong mode after you close the WSJT-X program. It keeps logging QSO's as FT8 even when the radio is not in a digital mode, and even when you change modes manually through N1MM+. I experienced no equipment failures. I'm glad that I don't have to nominate myself for the Crying Towel! My very modest battle station:



The conditions were flat for me, except for a brief opening to the South on Saturday, and to the Mid-West and VP9 on Sunday that really helped the grid count on 6m. I had marginal success on 6m MS with only 4 Q's. I decoded many stations, but I really need more power to be successful on MS. Looking at my log I'd say there was a nice distribution between the traditional modes and the digital modes. About 41% of the 290 QSO's were in digital mode. There was plenty of activity on phone in the first few hours to keep me busy and I didn't get on FT8 until three hours after the start of the contest. Throughout the contest I kept switching between FT8 and SSB/CW enough so that it didn't become a FT8-only contest. I think this was in part because Mike, N2DEQ, did a great job motivating folks to get on Slack, DMR, etc. to work as many Packrats as possible. I don't think I ever worked so many Packrats on so many bands. I could work most everyone on 4 bands. I was very surprised to get a phone call from Dale, AF1T, to try to run the bands. When I aim in his direction, I am pretty much looking at the top of the mountain I live on, so I had little hope of being able to work him. I was

... Notes cont'd

pleasantly surprised that we were able to hook up on 2 and 6m CW. It didn't work on the higher bands, but I was very happy to have two extra multipliers in the log!

I want to give a special shout out to my wife Jennifer, KG4KFV, for providing me Q's on 4 bands, including 2 very much needed multipliers on 222 and 432, and for taking care of the snow while I sat in my comfy shack working the bands! In hindsight we should have made all QSO's on FM so that she might have had a shot at winning in the FM category for the EPA section. Below is a picture of the "shack" she operated from.



Thank you to everyone who worked me or attempted to work me! I know it can be challenging pulling my peanut whistle signal out of the noise, but I appreciate it very much that you did! Also, many thanks to the rovers braving the cold weather. You guys keep things interesting!

I want to especially thank Mike, N2DEQ, for coordinating activities for this contest, and encouraging the membership to get on the air and work each other. They say it's like herding cats, but I bet it is worse herding 'Rats.

June 2019 Contest Plaque Sponsors / Winners

The December 2019 issue of QST listed Packrats as sponsors and winners of plaques in the June 2019 VHF contest.

Here they are:

Overall Single OP QRP Portable, won by VE3SMA, sponsored by Andrea K2EZ

Overall Single Op FM Only, won by K2NUD, sponsored by Andrea K2EZ

Overall Unlimited Rover, won by KG9DUK/R, sponsored by Andrea K2EZ

Atlantic Division Multiop, on by W3CCX, sponsored by Al W9KXI and Ken KA2LIM

Congratulations to the winners and thank you to the sponsors!

[Tnx to Jim WA3EHD for the heads up on this topic]

KOBAK Jan 2020 Rove

– Pete Kobak K0BAK

Early in 2019, I told myself I wouldn't go out in the Jan 2020 contest if the TV van wasn't ready. It would be too humiliating to have to use the club's short-distance microwave box when I have most of the components and loop antennas for those six bands to build into a real rove. Only about a week before the contest weekend, I decided to rove again mostly to contribute to the club goal. It was still humiliating.

Again this year, Gary WA2OMY helped me check out the microwave bands up to 5G on the Friday before the contest. After some antenna tightening, we were able to make contacts on the five bands easily. I assumed 10G would be problematic as usual, but Gary doesn't have the band so I didn't know for sure. After calibrating his frequencies, Gary also generously followed up with an email with the frequencies he saw. Since the errors were clustered within about 20KHz, I decided to pick a single IF offset for simplicity that hopefully would mean less searching for my signal during the contest.

For several days before the weekend, forecasts consistently called for significant winter weather on Saturday that would keep me off the road. Although there was always a chance of a last-minute improvement, I planned to only go out to Packrat's driveways on Sunday. I resurrected my rove plan from the 2018 contest, adding two more stations to the plan, and called everyone scheduled for a visit to confirm.

Saturday's snow and sleet started as predicted at 10am, and by noon my decision to stay close to home was confirmed. I had installed a 6m halo antenna on the trailer hitch of my Subaru WRX rove vehicle that would at least allow me to make some local contacts. I would be operating as a "turtle rove" ... coming out of the garage onto the driveway to operate until I got too cold, and then pull back into the garage again. Almost all of those contacts were on FT8, with just a few on CW, SSB, and MSK144. This was my first use of WSJT modes in a VHF contest. I removed the halo that night because it wouldn't do me much good in the rush to visit Packrats the next day.

On Sunday morning, my schedule was to visit Gary first at 8am. I woke early enough to have breakfast at a diner not far from him, but the roads were dangerous. Black ice caused sudden lack of traction and some slipping with no warning. I was pretty worried about driving safety at that point. After breakfast, I carefully pressed on to Gary's, betting that later the sun would warm the roads enough to melt the ice most places. 903 didn't work but the rest of Gary's 4 bands were easy contacts. Frustratingly, I had a personal issue that forced me to drive back home from Gary's. By the time I got back on the road, I was 50 minutes behind schedule. I hoped that the rest of the rove would be smoother, because this was a bad start.

Contacts were quick and easy as usual with Tom KA3FQS, including his 3 micros. Doc W3GAD was trying to make a micro contact when I arrived, then we made expected bands with the exception of 13cm. Ed WA3DRC was having problems his tube 2m amplifier, and was attempting to power up his solid state amp but was waiting for me to arrive before going out to get a part. I had the rare privilege of a short shack tour where I saw both 2m amps open on the floor. Ed is always very good at finding me on the micros and we quickly ran up the bands—with the exception of 10G that presented difficulty but we finally completed. He was just one band short of making a clean sweep of all my 11 bands due to his lack of 70cm FM capability.

Jim WA3EHD and Al KB3SIG were running a two-man multiop out of Jim's home. When I got there, I heard a contact with Stephanie WX3K, whom I would also hear later at N2DEQ's home. Jim's laser and 10G tabletop transmitter were not operating. Al was going to have a short-distance micro box so he could make contacts in addition to Jim's, but he was writing Arduino code when I got there trying to

make it work. I did at least get to see Al's long-range LED-based light communicator. Jim and I got 3 micro contacts and the HT bands, but overall this stop was a disappointment for the three of us.

Moving on to Northeast Philly to visit Elliott K3JJZ, we made contacts on all his bands for 9 QSOs. After Elliott's home came one of my least favorite parts of the route, driving down the awful Roosevelt Boulevard to a fairly narrow residential street to get to the Tacony-Palmyra Bridge. This is also the longest leg of the rove, almost an hour to Joe KC2TN's place in the Pinelands. I was glad though, to cross into NJ because last year rapidly freezing temps made me reluctant to drive through SNJ's long sparse roads for fear of sudden ice.

Joe has the station I covet the most. It may not be the biggest VHF station (anywhere else but Packrat territory it would be one of the best), but he's got a great mix of VHF, HF, and EME capabilities along with terrific automation and a well-engineered external cabling and ground system. Having a 40m beam is the cherry on top, so to speak, especially these days where low bands rule on HF. Hey Joe, I'm an orphan available for adoption. We discussed his latest station changes and his use of the same power/SWR meter with multi-band RF probe system that I bought for the van. I was happy to make the most contacts of all my visits there, 8 bands including 3 micros.

Although it's only a short drive from Joe's home to Mike WB2RVX's VHF superstation, I hadn't visited the last two years. Most of the way to Mike's was familiar because it's the only part of my rove traveling on roads I've bicycled on a few times for a charity ride from Philly to AC. Mike was ready when I arrived, and we quickly made laser and HT contacts. Janet KA2NYF also made a laser contact and helped Mike and I with the QSO times we were logging on paper. Mike is one of the two operators fastest to move up the micro bands. However, we couldn't make 10G work, keeping Mike from getting the sought-after clean sweep.

After a disappointing first-ever rove stop at Mike N2DEQ's home, I continued on to Bob W2SJ's improving station. He showed me his tower and new 6m antenna, then we made the laser and HT contacts. From the car, we easily ran up all 4 of Bob's micro bands through 9cm. As is my usual practice, I called Ray N3RG to give him an ETA, when he gave me the bad news about losing his rotator. Ray is competitive so I was sad that what should be a robust component would fail him during a big contest. Despite this, Ray was still the welcoming and happy guy he usually is when I arrived at his place about 40 minutes later. After indoor contacts, he directed me to drive onto his back yard so my scrawny little antennas would be pointed in the direction of his stuck antennas through my open back door. We ran fairly easily from 33cm to 6cm, but 10G was a problem. He could hear me well but I couldn't hear him. We resorted to him completing the contact by him sending CW, the opposite of what you'd expect. He thought the club's 10G preamp might be shot. Also there is an obvious crack in the solder joint of the antenna (again) which doesn't help. Most of the box's micro antennas are fragile, especially given I'm driving around quickly in a car with a stiff suspension so they bounce around a lot.

All the effort to get 10G paid off in having Ray get the only clean sweep of my 11 bands. Doesn't exactly make up for a stuck rotator, but it's something. Having completed my rove, my schedule pressure was off and Ray's contesting abilities were limited, so we could talk a bit and share the soup he made for us before I arrived. I also doodled on his two electric basses, realizing that I missed playing after 40 years ... and how I almost totally forgot how to play ... are those frets always that far apart? I wished Ray well for his hip operation in just a couple of days, and pulled out of his back yard toward home.

Shortly before getting to the 55 highway, I pulled over to attempt 2m SSB contacts in FM29 with a mag mount vertical antenna built for FM. I wasn't expecting much and didn't get much. I answered one SSB CQ from another station in FM29, and tried quite a few times to get K1TEO who was calling CQ on FT8. Frustratingly, all of his contacts (at least the ones I could see) were also in his home grid of FN31,

pointing out FT8 dominance. I got back to my neighborhood in FN20gd in about an hour and a half with relatively light traffic through Philly, and went to a local high spot to again try 2m with my vertical. I got two FT8 contacts in the same grid, including a dupe with WA3EHD who probably thought I was in FM29 (especially since I initially forgot to change my grid in WSJT).

I believe I had my highest score with the WRX rover, helped a bit by making three dozen 6m FT8 contacts on Saturday. My score might have been almost half again as high if the Saturday weather allowed me to make 10 or so contacts with an FN10 station, which I often do with K3TUF on Saturday with a line-of-sight shot across a valley. But overall I'm glad I could contribute to the club score by giving out some multipliers and high-point bands to fellow Packrats, as well as again seeing the impressive stations and nice operators who make up our terrific club.

Simple Computerized Smith Chart Matching Tools

(Well at least they look simple. Give them a try and see what you think)

From Ed WA3DRC: <https://quicksmith.online/>

From Lenny W2BVH: <https://www.rfmentor.com/jsmith> Site requires (free) registration and includes several other useful online rf calculators. They also have a YouTube video explaining how to use the app at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0Ztxj3Gkdk>

Critique of Inexpensive Ukrainian 222 MHz Xvtr

These are available at <https://www.ebay.com/itm/222-to-28-MHz-ASSEMBLED-TRANSVERTER-1-25meters-222mhz-220-VHF-UHF-Ham-Radio/222109347189?pageci=befe256a-69f4-4398-93ec-ac3515c156d5&epid=852943499>

Per Walt K3BPP: I got one of these units and it hears fairly good, have not tried tx as of yet.

Per Bill AA2UK: These transverters do not have the greatest LO (they drift). They have far too much drift for reliable FT8.

Perhaps they're in the category of "much better than nothing"? They're \$80 + \$15 shipping.

QST Member Spotlight

The February QST (Page 13) highlights the career of Packrat Skip W1PV. Congrats on making it into QST!

[Info sent to Cheese Bits by K0BAK]

CSVHF Conference Announcement

As this year's Conference President, I cordially invite you to attend the 54th annual Central States VHF Society Conference, which is being held at the Radisson Hotel located on the beautiful riverfront of the Mississippi River in La Crosse, Wisconsin on July 24th and 25th, 2020.

This year's event will have all the great activities you've come to expect from a CSVHFS Conference: technical presentations, antenna range, noise figure lab, rover row and dish bowl, Thursday evening social activity, Friday evening trade-fest, dealer room, hospitality suite for evening socializing, fun family activities, and a closing banquet with a guest speaker and a prize table.

If you have never been to a CSVHFS conference before, you will find it a great event where you will learn many new things, meet new people, and connect with others you have talked to on-the-air. If you are new to VHF-and-above operating, you will want to be sure to attend the perennial favorite, VHF 101, an alternate track talk designed to get new VHFers successfully on the air. One thing we are certain of: if you attend the CSVHFS conference, you will go home reinvigorated about operating and experimenting on the bands above 50 MHz!

We are sending this announcement out early in the new year so that you can make time in your summer schedule to attend. La Crosse, Wisconsin is easy to get to either by car or air. Interstate 90 passes directly through the city, and the La Crosse Airport (LSE) has direct connections. Hotel accommodations at the special conference rate will be announced shortly. Registration for the conference will open around May 1st. Be sure to visit the conference website at <http://2020.csvhfs.org/> for ongoing updates and further information. Please direct any questions you may have about the Conference to registration@csvhfs.org. We look forward to seeing you in La Crosse in late July!
73, Bruce Richardson, W9FZ, CSVHFS President



From KA2LIM via WB2ONA

The 2020 Southeastern VHF Society Conference

Gainesville, Georgia on April 24-25, 2020. The hotel is now taking reservations directly. To book your room, please see the conference page <http://svhfs.org/wp/2020-gainesville-ga/>

Ramada Inn
400 E.E. Butler Parkway
Gainesville, GA 30501
770-531-0907

The conference rate is \$80 per night.

Call for papers:

Papers and presentations are solicited on both the technical and operational aspects of VHF, UHF and Microwave weak signal amateur radio. The deadline for the submission of papers and presentations for this year's conference is March 7, 2020. Papers and presentations are being handled by Charles Osborne, K4CSO (K4CSO@twc.com).

Please see <http://svhfs.org/wp/conference/call-for-papers/> for complete details concerning papers and presentations.

The 2020 Eastern VHF-UHF-Microwave Conference

sponsored by the North East Weak Signal Group (NEWS) will be held April 17-18-19 at:

Manchester Inn & Suites (was Baymont Inn & Suites, same site as in 2018)
20 Taylor St., Manchester, CT 06042

Reservations available Now: \$99 per room thru March 15

Call the Manchester Inn & Suites:
860-783-5600

ask for the "North East Weak Signal Group" or "Eastern VHF Conference" \$99 rate

Registration \$20 (\$25 after April 10) includes proceedings CD & Saturday Lunch Banquet \$35 Must order before April 10

REGISTRATION & Banquet Purchase is ON-LINE NOW @ newsvhf.com

SCHEDULE

Friday, April 17

Afternoon Program & Evening Hospitality

Sat. April 18

Full Day Program, Vendors, All Day Beverages, Pizza+Grinder Lunch included with Registration! Evening Banquet with Prize Table

Sun. April 19

Morning tailgate in parking lot, 8am-Noon

Call for Papers & Presentations

Please Contact Paul Wade, W1GHZ w1ghz@arri.net. Please consider making a presentation and/or writing a paper to be included in the Proceedings CD

For general conference information:
Mark Casey, K1MAP, map1@mapinternet.com
413-777-9828 call or text

The Wayback Machine In CHEESE BITS, 50 Years Ago

Nibbles from February 1970. Vol. XIII Nr. 2
de Bert, K3IUV
(author's comments in italics)

“Our Prez Sez”. Prez Ernie, W3KKN, commented on the January SS. His ever timely comments are repeated here. “What makes a guy look forward to the next SS? Certainly not the band conditions (*always miserable in Jan*), the QRN, the bad signals, the lousy operators, all of the hard work. Could it be the club honor, the prestige, the competition? Maybe. I think it is more basic. The desire to accomplish and to improve one's own station. The satisfaction of a new project or antenna working out. Out of the competition, what did we learn? I've got my list of improvements. What are you changing? Everybody has either a rig, a converter, receiver or antenna that needs some kind of work.

Membership. Applied for membership: WA3NFV, Dan Mitten, Holland Rd, Holland, PA. (*Dan, did you realize it was 50 years ago? Welcome to the Old-timers group*).

VHF Sweepstakes Report. The chairman, Harry, W3CL reported on the contest activity. Highlights follow: Though their numbers were down, the Packrats performed in an admirable fashion. Some of our “big guns” were missing. W3HKZ dashed off on vacation (*poor planning*), and K3BPP went off on a pre-arranged skiing safari to Switzerland (*more poor planning*).

Remember that, Walt?), 67 logs were submitted by 64 members, including one for 220 mobile by K3JJZ. We can always tell when El's 6-meter gear has been stolen from his car (*ouch!*). Crying Towel stories were plentiful. The “towel” and a 5894 were won by K3IGX at the January 21 meeting. Activity seemed to be down on all bands (*seems like I've heard that song before*). Some notable contacts were made. W3CXU worked VE3CWT on 2-meter CW, K3IPM and W2AXU worked K9HMS in Illinois, K3IPM, Stan, also worked WA5RMS in Mississippi and WA4OSR in Georgia. A list of the high scorers was shown. It included current active members K3IPM, Stan, K3IUV, Bert (*that's me*) K3JJZ, El, and (*then*) WB2SZK, Randy.

Why not another band? Posted by Doc, K3GAS, he asked “why not make an effort to get on another band? What Band, you say? Well if you're not already there, try the Packrat intercom frequency – 220. Did you know that more than 35 contacts could have been made on 220? 432, K3UJD, Mario is coordinating a 432 converter project. More than 10 contacts available. 1296 will be commanding more interest this year. K3IUV, Bert, has his dish antenna up (*I must have given up on the rhombic*) and made a contact in this contest (*wow*). Doc has the equipment, but his homebrew antenna isn't brewing any signals yet (*Doc was the perennial winner of the “most miserable failure” at the annual homebrew night*).

“From the Book Rack.” The book review net, conducted by member Paul Behrman, K3WEU reviewed “Tape

Recording for fun and profit.” By Leonard Lane. \$4.95 in paperback, with over 200 illustrations. The usual problem analysis and servicing techniques sections covered all aspects of recorders, including their integration into complete systems. One of the chapters covered use as an “eavesdropping devices.” (*Hmm*).

Technical Topics. W3HKZ, Ed, penned an interesting article titled “Proper Name Antennas.” (*Ed was one our resident technical gurus. He was the chief Engineer at WCAU-TV, and was the only person I knew [except for myself] that had a 10” Westinghouse color TV, circa 1959.*) He listed the names of 6 different antenna types with HAM applicability, and gave descriptions of each. I'll list them here. See how many you can describe. When you give up, go to the original issue on the W3CCX website and find out! Adcock, Alford, Bellini-Tosi, Beverage, Bruce, Butler (*The antenna, not the oscillator*).

Business Card Ads. We always had a collection of business cards included as ads (*money for the club*). This month, I noted a number in the category “no longer here” Some may still be familiar to you. Fertik's Electronics, A.G Radio Parts, and Kass Electronics, as well as several member's ads (*all now SK*).

Swap Shoppe. By W3ZRR. (*Always nostalgia.*) . For sale: by K3MZA. A Gonset 903A, 500 watt 2-meter linear. AM, FM, SSB and CW. “Hardly used, good as new.” \$150.

Tidbits. K3JJZ (ye editor) and xyl Lorraine announced the birth of Holli Beth who timed her arrival perfectly

(one week before the contest, and two days before the end of the year – another tax deduction).

Miscellany. *Postage for this copy was still a single 6-cent Roosevelt stamp. (6 double sided, 8-½ x 11” sheets.) As usual, many “folksy” comments about members, their families, and activities were included in this edition of Cheese Bits. If interested, or for more detail on the above items, visit our website (www.W3CCX.COM) and read the full issue scanned by K3IUUV (me), and posted on the website by W3SO, our webmaster. Remember, I have also posted the club Officers history, club Membership history, and Packrat Inventory (updated frequently) on the W3CCX website. These files are password protected, and only accessible to registered members. Have you registered? I hope you enjoyed reading these bits of nostalgia as much as I did in writing the article. If yes, you might let me know. Thanks to those that did.*



thirty, de K3IUUV
(K3IUUV@ARRL.net)

Number of Entries (2020)

Entries by Competing Clubs in the January
VHF Contest

ORLEANS COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB	8
(WNY)	
ROCHESTER AMATEUR RADIO CLUB	1
(WNY)	
ROCHESTER VHF GROUP	4
(WNY)	
NORTH EAST WEAK SIGNAL GROUP	16
THE ONTARIO VHF ASSOCIATION	36
NORTHERN LIGHTS RADIO SOCIETY	15
PACIFIC NORTHWEST VHF SOCIETY	36
POTOMAC VALLEY RADIO CLUB	26
SOCIETY OF MIDWEST CONTESTERS	20
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CONTEST CLUB	18
YANKEE CLIPPER CONTEST CLUB	15

(Compiled by Dave W3KM)

ARRL Presentation - April 2nd, 2020

The Keystone VHF Club is planning a special event on the regular meeting date, April 2, 2020, at the York County EOC. A social hour (6 -7 PM) will precede the business meeting. Light refreshments will be provided. Following a short meeting at 7 PM, Representatives from the American Radio Relay League (ARRL) will make presentations about the ARRL and offer a Question and Answer session about the ARRL and current issues affecting Pennsylvania amateur radio operators. This event is open to all members of KVHF and invitations will be extended to other regional clubs to attend.

The planning committee needs to know in advance how many people will be attending. This will help in the planning efforts for a successful event. There is limited seating capacity at the EOC and refreshments must be ordered. RSVP by March 6. to https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScVc8MZKJ3uveFw4dkzquCHYdG_u-4vUucznd2GTH4yscOtA/viewform

Address: 120 Davies Drive, York PA 17402
(Sent to Cheese Bits by Bill AA2UK)

Events

For inclusion, please direct event notices to the editor.

Cherryville (NJ) Hamfest - Hamfest - March 14, 2020. Sponsored by Cherryville Repeater Assoc. See <http://www.qsl.net/w2cra> for details.

TCF (Trenton Computer Festival) - Conference - March 21, 2020. At The College of New Jersey, Ewing NJ. Details at <https://tcf-nj.org/>

Penn Wireless Assoc (Pending) - Auction - March 23, 2020. Falls Township Building. See <http://www.pennwireless.org/> to see if it will be held.

2M Spring Sprint - Contest - Monday April 6, 2020. See <https://sites.google.com/site/springvhfupsprints/home/2020-information> for details.

222 Spring Sprint - Contest - Tuesday April 14, 2020. See <https://sites.google.com/site/springvhfupsprints/home/2020-information> for details.

432 Spring Sprint - Contest - Wednesday April 22, 2020. See <https://sites.google.com/site/springvhfupsprints/home/2020-information> for details.

RF Hill RC - Auction - April 29, 2020. Sellersville FD Banquet Hall. See <http://rfhillarc.club/auction/> for details.

Microwave Spring Sprint - Contest - Saturday May 2, 2020. See <https://sites.google.com/site/springvhfupsprints/home/2020-information> for details.

Warminster ARC Hamfest - Hamfest - May 3, 2020. Buck County Community College. Details to follow.

6M Spring Sprint - Contest - Saturday May 9, 2020. See <https://sites.google.com/site/springvhfupsprints/home/2020-information> for details.

Packrat Hamcation 2020

This year we found a nice group of Packrats at the annual Hamcation event held at the Central Florida Fairgrounds near Orlando.

It was a very sunny and breezy set of days for the Friday through Saturday event. All of our favorite vendors have displays for everyone to indulge.

We were aggregated near the DEMI (Downeast Microwave) and FLWSS (Florida Weak Signal Society) area towards the rear of the fest where they park every year. Warren, WB2ONA had a trailer load of stuff that was nearly empty by mid Saturday when we held our informal meeting. Joining us was Bill Jaxheimer, W3HJ, and John Sortor, KB3XG who both spent several days around the Orlando area. Nick, N3YMS, is a regular attendee and was slowly going through his stack of repeaters for sale.

While we were shooting the breeze along came Drex, W3ICC, who filled us in on his latest roving experiences. All the while we were warmly greeted by the DEMI crew, Steve, N2CEI, and Sandy, K4SME. Mike, WB2RVX was in the area for a Generac conference, but unfortunately was unable to drop in to see us due to some last-minute commitments. Rick, K1DS was also unable to make the trip, but has regularly attended in years past. There was a surprise visit from Phil, WA3NUF last year.

I always look forward to visiting the hamfest, the most exciting thing to me is seeing folks from the home base. We spend winters about an hour and a half away from the hamfest facilities. Why don't you plan to take some time off from the cold weather and join us next year for Hamcation?

--Phil K3TUF



Nauru C21MB -> WA3QPX

Hi Lenny. New one for DXCC.

A single yagi and a small amp is all that is needed to get started in EME. The ability to elevate aerial is the first big help. A simple wedge mount of a couple pieces of sheet metal and some bolts will do for a manual mount. The Moon does not move very fast. An adjustment every 10 minutes or so works fine. Of course more antennas and more power is better but that is Ham Radio (Hi).

I started with two 14 element yagis and a TE systems amp. My current system is four yagis and KW with computer controlled rotators in azel. As of today (2/6/20)DXCC is 151 on 2m.

73, Paul, WA3QPX

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Recent DX

12/28/19 Bill AA2UK worked Ken KU8Y using JT65C on 1296.060. Signals from -9 to -26. 622 miles contact to EN61uw.

1/7/20 WA3QPX worked WB0IWG NORTH DAKOTA +7 signal FT8 on 6M. Winter Es is working.

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HLV-2000* 5,250

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HLV-770* 3,150

HLV-1470* 4,580

1270 – 1300 MHz

HLV-350* 3,200

HLV-800* 4,950

70 – 440 MHz

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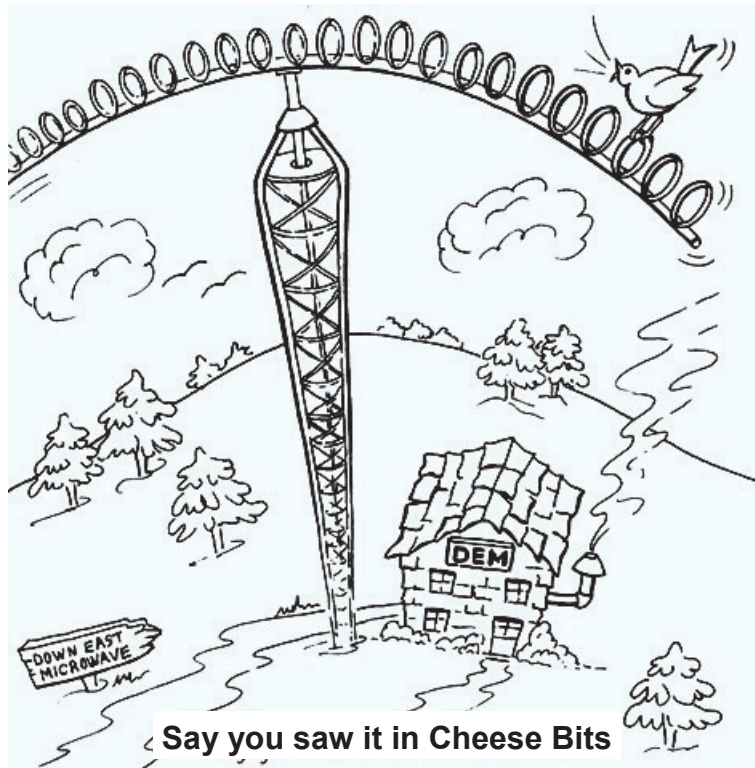
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