



# CHEESE BITS

W3CCX  
CLUB MEMORIAL CALL

ARRL  
Affiliated  
Club



Volume LIII

November 2012

Number 11

## PREZ SEZ:

As the remnants of the devastating hurricane Sandy are still fresh in our minds we want to think of those among our group who were less fortunate in this weather event.

Lots of minor tweaks, one tower in CT is folded over, and an EME dish is ruined; it's what we all dreaded during that fateful Monday night when the wind howled like it never did for most of us before. I know sleep came very hard for me that night. Many were without power for many days, and may still be down as you read this. It sure brings emergency planning to the forefront and **there are ideas around to possibly make it a meeting topic.**

CW is a helpful mode for weak signal operation. When you are armed with a tool that can bring more points to your score, it's worth paying close attention to improving your skills in that mode. I know there are many in the club who use the mode often, we heard this at the last meeting.

**But some are a bit apprehensive.** For those, I'd like to encourage you to explore a few measures that might help. First, use the tool called: "Morserunner". It is available on line at: <http://www.dxatlas.com/morserunner/> . With this tool you can simulate a contest at any speed you want, start slow; it even comes with the ability to invoke QRN, QRM, QSB and flutter, all real time possibilities. Un-check all of those distractions to get started and set the speed for whatever you are comfortable with.

For those of you who are more daring, try any one of the HF contests that allow CW . You

should at least attempt to copy some of the exchanges during the contest. All practice helps your proficiency, and when you use these skills in the next VHF/UHF contest, it will benefit the club overall score.

This past month included our most excellent Mid Atlantic VHF Conference. We had a great time putting the event on, and a wonderful time enjoying all of the fellowship and great talks, not to mention the deals throughout the event. Thanks go to all who made this conference a reality.

October also hosted our Rover Panel at the regular meeting; we had presentations by most of our Rovers, time ran out and there is still one Rover who will show his setup at the next meeting. I also need to say that I erred in announcing the CQ WW DX Contest as a CW contest, it was in fact an SSB contest. That works well into the emphasis this month on CW; the CW Contest will be in November.

November is CW month; CW Sweepstakes on the first weekend, then CQ WW DX CW Contest on the fourth weekend; and beginning on the last day of the month is the ARRL 160 Meter CW Contest. Be sure to get on and at least listen to these contests to improve your copy speed. November is also the month that we hear about the June Haiti DXpedition at our regular meeting.

The Packrat Constitution begins with Article I, the name of the organization, but after one line we

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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	903.100 MHz	WA3SRU FN20le

Visit the Mt Airy VHF Radio Club at: [www.packratvhf.com](http://www.packratvhf.com) or [www.w3ccx.com](http://www.w3ccx.com)

have Article II, Objectives. The first Objective is “To form a body of radio amateurs interested in the use of the very high frequency radio spectrum as a means of communication”. This objective is one of the hallmarks of Packrat activity, we push the envelope when it comes



to communicating on higher and higher frequencies. What is your highest band? Are you working on “the next band”? There is **hardly an excitement greater than making that long contact on a new microwave band.**

**Lets work on lots of bands,  
Phil K3TUF**

## Editors Note

I'd like to take an inch or three of column space to thank my XYL, Wendy, (a non-ham) for helping me put up my HF antenna yesterday. The antenna was blown down about a month ago in a wind storm. And as Murphy's law might have predicted, there were several world wide openings on 10 meters while it was down.

I was working on the antenna myself for about an hour when it became evident that 4 hands really were needed. So I went in and asked Wendy if she could give me a hand for about a half hour .... Which of course turned into a 4 or 5 hour ordeal. Some of the ordeal could not have been predicted in advance, like the wire getting hung up in two different trees. But some of it was just lame moves on my part. Take my advice: its better to connect the feed line to your antenna **before** its hoisted up in the air. Its also a good idea to tie-off the hoisting rope before you apply tension on the other end of the antenna. This way the rope won't fly through the pulley 30 feet up, requiring you to run an extension ladder up your house to replace the rope. Thanks Wendy for your help and good humor!!

73, **Lenny W2BVH**

Ps - I understand Marietta has helped Joe K1JT at the working platform of his tower at 20'. Are there any other spouse helpers in the club?

# MID-ATLANTIC N.E. VHF CONFERENCE

I think the club as a whole owes, and I certainly want to give, a big thank you to the conference leadership for a outstanding and enjoyable weekend dedicated to our hobby.

Rick, Phil, George, and Mike and all the others, appeared to work tirelessly all weekend as they have for the past several months to pull all of this together.

I don't know all the members of the Northeast group involved, but Mark, K1MAP always appeared to be in the right place at the right time all weekend. The joint effort worked perfectly.

Let's use the experience from this past weekend as a starting point for assistance and improvements to individual stations and club score in the January Contest!

**Gary WA2OMY**



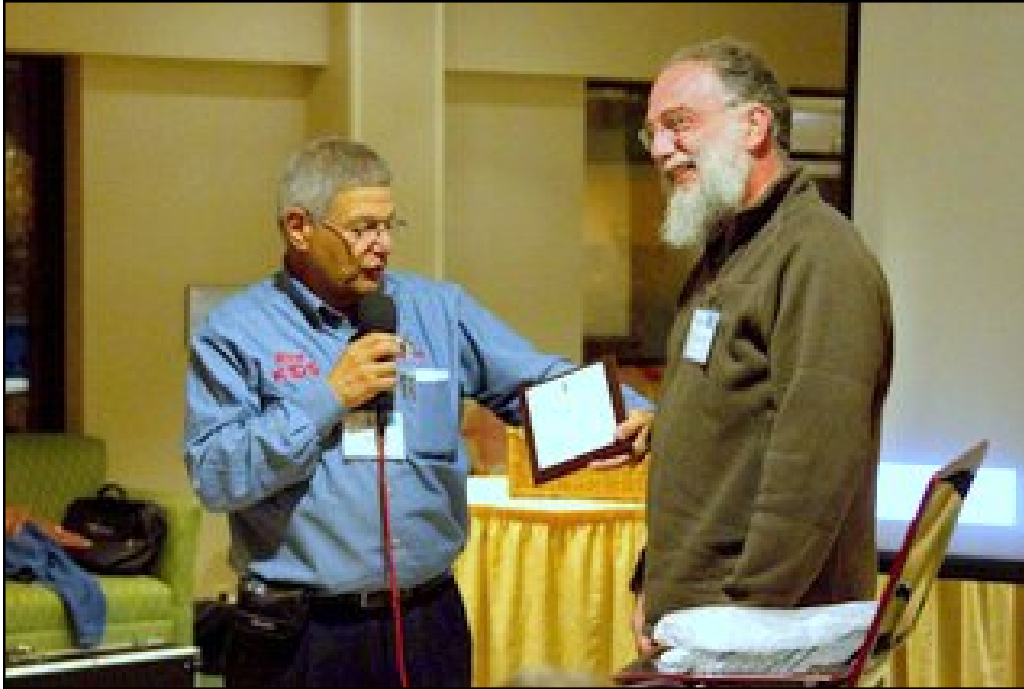
Mark K1MAP and N.E.W.S. provide hospitality



Enough door prizes to make 3 rounds for everyone



A large attentive crowd. And great presentations to spark everyone's interest



John W1RT accepting the Seabreeze Rover award

Banquet speaker KA1ZE on "Remote Operation and the 205 Phenomenon", really held the crowd's attention



**Rohde & Schwarz** brought test equipment capable of any measurement we might ask for . Thanks Greg!!!!



Here's part of the Banquet crowd

"It was indeed a wonderful conference. I too want to thank all involved both as helpers and as attendees. I had a great time seeing folks, particularly the ones from the south who we normally don't see."  
**Phil K3TUF**

"Kudos to all of the organizers ! Good to catch up."  
73,  
**W1SMS**  
Steve Simons

Some of the presenters



W3SZ "Bandscope"



W8ZN "The K8GP Contest Superstation"



K1WHS "Meter Power Amp Conversion"



W1GHZ "A Flexible VCO Lockin Board"

It was nice seeing everyone at the conference. I also got to meet a lot of NEWS members that I have worked but never met. I also got to meet **Steve & Sandra from Demi**. I even purchased a 144-28 transverter to allow me to use my 28MHZ IF rig on 144 IF equipment.

Another highlight was meeting Stan, KA1ZE from the 205 Group. Had a nice chat. Enjoyed his history presentation of the setup of his remote location.

I also worked Wayne, N6NB thursday evening after the BOD meeting. I was able to work him on 6 thru 1296. He is equipped for 6 thru 10 Gig.

**73's Joe - WA3SRU**



Wayne Overbeck and his super trailer



Al and Paul enjoying the conference

What a weekend! Many Pack Rats and other weak VHF signal enthusiasts got together Friday and yesterday at the Joint VHF Conference. It appears to me that everyone had a great time, found good food and beverage to consume, took home some excellent door prizes, purchased or received goods from other hams, and oh yes, attended **entertaining and educational presentations**. I spent a good deal of time in the testing lab to make sure that Greg had everything needed to check out gear besides those very excellent Rohde & Schwarz analyzers. Now I know what to ask the lovely XYL to get me for the holidays <hi,hi>.

A few other attendees have already written in to thank those who organized the conference. As one of several organizers, I think I will instead thank those who took time out of their routine to come to Bensalem. Any excuse to get 80 or so hams with the skill level and operating experience of those who attended the conference makes it a **special time**, worthy of any reasonable efforts required to pull it off.

73, [Michael KB1JEY](#)

Thanks to everyone for the Great Conference! I attended all the talks and really enjoyed every one, and learned a lot.

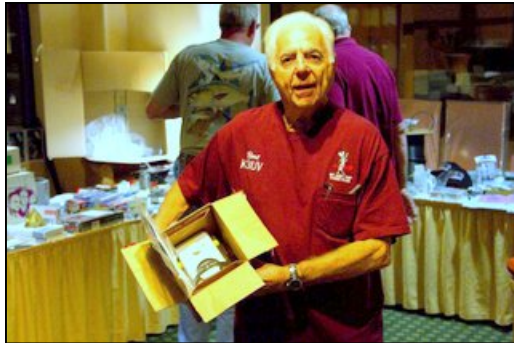
I enjoyed the banquet, and was very impressed with the quality of the food [I had 3 entrees plus a bunch of side dishes and the salad too so I feel very qualified to give my commendations to the staff]

Stan's banquet talk was great, too. He is an excellent speaker and both his description of his remote station and the 205 phenomenon were very interesting, and very well presented.

The PackRats and the NEWS Group are two very high quality organizations!

Kudos to all!

73, [Roger W3SZ](#)



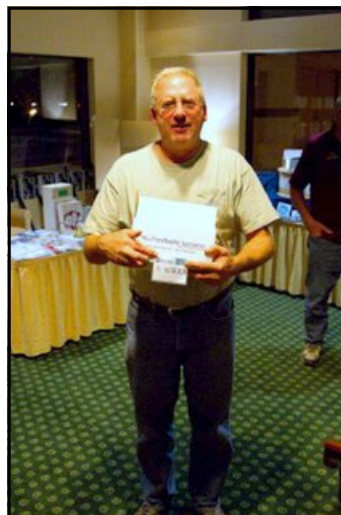
Bert got his Bird (43)

This has been the best Mid Atlantic vhf conference I have attended in many years. The coordination between the two groups was great and made it possible. See Y'all up North next year.

**Paul, wa3qpx**



El auctioned items with humor (no extra charge)



Brian got his Flex Radio SDR

### Quotes from Maine

We are used to seeing great blog posts from the ham from Maine, but this month's VHF Conference presentation on a 6 meter SSPA adventures by **Dave Olean K1WHS** was a delight of witticisms:

- "I put a cover over the SSPA board—you don't want to drop pliers onto it."
- "I know how a 2E26 and 6146B grid works. There were no ionic bonds in 2E26's. FETs have peculiar problems. You need to be a molecular physicist to know what's going on. You can't see it!"
- "You could put 1200V on the 2E26 and get 100W out of it—at least for a while. With a FET, if you exceed the ratings, you get a blue flash, and that's that!"
- "I think the slight improvements may be because of the harmonic energy. The meter pegged violently and scared the crap out of me."
- "Another blue flash—running it without a load—you shouldn't have seven gin-and-tonics when working on amplifiers."

Since this was my 1st conference I can accurately and easily state this was the BEST VHF conference I've attended.

I've attended many other types of conferences but this one was very well done.

The speakers were ALL excellent and the dinner and prizes were Great also. It was like going to a dozen Packrat meetings ALL at once with a Super Sized "Super Mario table"

I'm glad I decided to go this year!

**Joe - KC2TN**

**PLEASE be sure to check out 136 additional high res pictures from the Conference at <http://smeuse.smugmug.com/Other/2012-Eastern-VHFUHF-Conference/>**

# Microwave EME Weekend

Several Packrats were at the QTH of K2UYH to operate the first microwave weekend of the ARRL EME Contest. Bands 2304MHz and up are in play for the two days and this will be followed by weekends in November and December on bands 50MHz-1296MHz. Since Al has a 28' Kennedy dish and an assemblage of gear for the higher bands, K1JT, K2TXB and K1DS converged for the two moon passes and we operated on 2304, 3400 and 5760. Although there is also 100W for 10GHz available, Al chose not to use it this time due to the difficulties in getting the TWT and transverter mounted into the feed, **especially in the rain** early Sunday.

More than 20 stations were worked across the three bands, putting the group ahead of the pace of the past two years for this event. I was present for the 5GHz operation, with about 17 watts output, echoes were easily heard off the moon. The most difficult issue was keeping the dish tracking the moon, as the beam width at this frequency is under a degree. Normally this is not terribly difficult, as Al has digital tracking of the azimuth and elevation, but recently this has been complicated a bit with some slack in the chain that drives the azimuth and the mild rock of the dish as the elevation is adjusted.

While I was there we worked two JA stations and one VK station in the western window.

Al has Spectravue running on his main computer, using a downconverter from 144 to 28MHz, but Russ was able to watch stations using his laptop computer on 144MHz directly with a **Funcube dongle** taking output directly from the microwave transverter. Having both of these screens also made the dish az/el adjustments easier by watching moon noise.

The station operates for this contest under the call K1JT, as the 2meter activity will be conducted from Joe's QTH on the next activity weekends, and the scores will be combined as a team effort as the stations are in the general vicinity of each other. If the weather holds up, I may even be able **get into the contest on my own** on 1296MHz with a new amplifier that can put out 250+ watts. 73, Rick, K1DS



to



## Food for Thought

While "scanning" the 1980 Cheese Bits editions for posting on the W3CCX web site, I ran across an article that I had written in September, 1980. The information (and question posed) still seems apropos. I'd be interested in comments. Perhaps it could be an addition to the Packrat Contest Clock?

### THOUGHTS ON THE VHF/UHF CONTESTS

De K3IUUV, Bert (*as published in Cheese Bits, September 1980*)

Following the recent UHF Contest, two ideas occurred to me, which I would urge the readers to consider. The first item concerns the low number of contacts made from the Phila. area on the east-west path. Since we know that there are many active VHFers in Ohio and further west, I don't think it can be blamed on the activity level. Rather, I suggest it is caused by the combination of saturation level local signals and primarily our tendency to align the antennas on the NE/SW path. This antenna alignment comes naturally due to the large population and section numbers available in the New England area.

To encourage more contacts, I suggest we try to set designated times when the East Coast group will plan to beam west. For lack of any other constraint, I would offer the odd half-hours (7:30, 9:30, etc.) as suitable times to try the east-west path. Discussions with K8WW confirm that the Midwest stations tire of waiting for us to beam west and know that we generally don't until near the end of the contests.

The second item is briefer, but more obvious. There is more spectrum on all of our bands than the 20 or 30 kHz that we use during the contests. Spreading out will reduce the QRM, overload, desensing, etc. with no state-of-the-art technological improvement needed.

If anybody else agrees, look for me in the Sept. QSO party on the E-W path at the odd half-hours, and down between 432.0 and 432.1 MHz. 73, Bert, K3IUUV

### ..Strays

Just got back from MUD, here's my writeup: <http://reactancelabs.com/?p=254>

Thanks again to the 50 MHz and Up Group for a great MUD!  
Tony KC6QHP



K3IUUV Bert did this panorama photo the Friday of the Mid-Atlantic NE VHF Conference. An interesting perspective. A fair amount of distortion but a nice experiment.

## Bruce Wood N2LIV, SK

Dear Packrats,  
My husband had fond memories of getting together with you. Following over two years of health challenges, he passed peacefully in his sleep on Oct. 20th. As he had donated his body to science, there will be no funeral, just a small memorial for family and close friends. Thank you for the happiness your club helped to bring into his life.

**Bonnie Wood**

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Looking back, it was a pleasure working alongside of Bruce N2LIV to present many of the recent Eastern VHF/UHF Conferences. RIP my friend.

**73, Steve Simons W1SMS**

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We are all saddened to hear of Bruce's passing. He was a great contributor the well being of our hobby.

**Phil K3TUF**

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I remember Bruce from a NEVHS conference some years ago. Most of you know I do not drink beer. At a hospitality reception I mentioned to Bruce "Where is the vino I thought you guys in New England had class". Bruce then gave me \$100 and said the spirits store is on the right after turning right at the red light from the hotel in New Hampshire. I thought he was joking but sure enough 300 yards after the light was New Hampshire and the beverage establishment. Bruce all will miss you.

Rest well.

**Paul, WA3QPX**

## ..Strays

Hello all,  
I am in need of 1100 feet of 1/4" EHS (extra high strength) guy wire for my tower project. I realize that I can order it from distributors as I will be for the rest of the items. Just wanted to see if anyone might have or suggest a source for this. Even some smaller lengths would be useful.

Thanks, Paul WA3GFZ

## CQ WW DX Reports

Yesterday (10/27/12) I worked 177 countries. Now that you are ready for the storm, put a wet noodle out your window and tune your radio to 10 meters.

And if you are adventurous, get on the air, it's all on SSB. Enjoy, and good luck in the storm.

**73, Phil K3TUF**

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I spent a few hours plying the HF bands off and on during CQ WW. Even though I was operating very casually and did not call CQ at all it was interesting and fun.

I worked mostly 20 Meters Saturday afternoon using a resonant dipole which I had built last week, then 40 Meters and a little 80 on Saturday evening with my low band Delta loop. Like shooting fish in a barrel.

On Sunday I wanted to try 15M but forcing 21MHz into a low band Delta isn't so great so I ran down to Lowes and picked up 50' of #12 stranded THHN. That and some junk box parts yielded a vertically oriented 12' square loop fed at the corner for vertical polarization. After installing the loop I swept through the phone portion of band from bottom to top just one time and picked up about 30 countries. I had to Google some of them to see where in the world they are.

I never did check 10 Meters, maybe next time.

**73, Len, N3NGE**

# WV2ITR History

I was first licensed as Novice WV2ITR in 1959 and rapidly advanced to General WA2ITR within the year. My first rigs were ARC-5's that we bought down on "Radio Row" in lower Manhattan for \$8. That was \$3 for the transmitter and \$5 for the receiver (I know I am making WA3GFZ jealous). Operation was on 80/75m and 40m with a dipole extending across the entire roof of my apartment building in the Bronx. As I graduated from Novice to General, I was able to replace the homebrew 6AG7 crystal oscillator with ARC-5 internal VFO. I also built in the Heising modulation scheme to be able to be on AM phone. Note there are two power supplies with their VR tubes in the picture. On top of the ARC-5 receiver is a dual triode 12AT7 "pre-selector" pre-amplifier. I tapped out the code on a venerable J-38 before I advanced myself to one of those Lafayette semi-automatic keys, and eventually I built a dual-triode electronic keyer, complete with a homebrew paddle from soup can tin. I can't say I worked all states or DXCC, but I was an active CW and phone ragchewer in those days and an avid contester, especially for ARRL Sweepstakes and the VE Contest. I was also very active in the East coast high-speed traffic net and handled lots of messages, especially during the hurricane season. My VHF experience really didn't start until I built the dual acorn tube walkie-talkie from the 1945 ARRL handbook, and eventually I graduated to the Heathkit Twoer with a homebrew ground plane antenna centered on an SO-239 connector. Great memories. 73, Rick, K1DS



## Punting on the River



Three Packrat XYLs (Jani-XYL K1DS, Judy-XYL WA3QPX and Barbara-XYL K2TXB) enjoyed a punting expedition while the hams were busy at the EME meeting in Cambridge, England this past August.

# Everyone OK?

"Everyone OK?" This was the question asked by Bill Olson, K1DY, on the Packrat reflector on Wednesday 10/31/12, a day+ after Hurricane Sandy waltzed its way through the northeast. Here are some of the replies. Note, the replies we see here, just by the nature of the event had to be a bit biased toward the less catastrophic, since those most affected likely didn't (and still may not) have power or internet service to let us know how they made out..

As I write this (11/4/12), I hear the hum of generators and the buzz of chainsaws out my window. And the front window of the house reveals a line of cars waiting for gas at the Exxon station > 1/4 mile from here.

Stay safe; help as best you can.

—Lenny W2BVH

## 10/31/2012 12:50 PM

Hi all, Not hearing a lot of "Sandy related health and welfare" info from down there. Is everyone OK? I hope so!! Pretty much totally escaped the storm up here.. a little rain, light winds..

Bill, K1DY

## Wed, 31 Oct 2012 13:16:19

Hi Bill,

The wind was the major problem in this area. Lots of trees down and many power outages that are still not repaired (including me). Last report I heard this morning was > 500K homes without power in the PECO service area. Anyone close to the shore line got hit the worst.

Motorola just reopened today (which is why I am able to be on email) but even now only half the buildings have power.

Must be global warming since this was the latest storm of the century -- we seem to have a new storm of the century every 18 months or so.

Phil NUF

...And Bill replied

Hi Phil,... Well, "back to work" is a good sign. If the lack of email from the Rats is ONLY due to lack of AC power, that's a good thing I guess.. That will eventually get repaired. Hope everyone is well, and, less important, but still... of course, all the towers and antennas survived..

It's always something I guess!!

## 10/31/2012 1:29 PM

Hi all

We were high and mostly dry - a little water in the basement. The antennas survived the extremely high winds out of the east that managed to tear a big portion of the barn roof off, power was out for 30 hours and the telephone interface for FIOS failed. All but the roof have been resolved. Hope to make the Monday night nets.

Doc W3GAD

## 10/31/2012 1:42 PM

Lots of damage here. No injuries. Many trees down. 120' tower folded over like spaghetti. 80' pine came down over guys.

Thanks Sandy !

Steve W1SMS

....Everyone OK? Cont'd

**10/31/2012 1:51 PM**

Alls well here at our house in N. Jersey. Lost power, but just for short intervals. One small (10" diameter) tree went down onto the neighbors fence, but he came over with a chain saw yesterday to help clear it. Another neighbors shed went sailing over the fence and landed in my yard, but it didn't hit anything.

Today, it took my XYL 1/2 hour to get my son to the doctor, usually a 10 minute ride. Trees and power lines down everywhere. Not possible to drive in a straight line for more then 3-4 blocks. Gas lines 1-2 hours.

Never hope to see this kind of thing again.

Lenny W2BVH

**10/31/2012 1:54 PM**

ALL OK here in Atco! BIG sigh of relief....Lost power for about 1/2 hour..but that's it!

Cranked down the new tower to 25' and held my breath on the 80' tower and VHF antennas. Only problem looks like the VHF stack slipped about 45 degrees in the mast-rotor clamp.

I really believe since the Eye of the storm went right over us, we were spared the wrath of the heaviest winds. I feel for those at the shore and those North of us in NY and NNJ.

Joe - KC2TN

**Wed, 31 Oct 2012 18:08:09**

To all,

After getting beat up in the last storm I decided to lower both towers and tilt them over so the antennas were on the ground. It worked... 60mph + winds - didn't loose electric - no damage to anything! I hope none of you had any damage either.

The link below is to the Downe Township Fire Dept site... they are located at Fortesque. They went out after the storm and did damage assessment and the pictures tell everything. They include Gandy's beach, Money Island, and Fortesque. All access roads to these areas are currently closed by the NJ State police.

<http://www.downtwfirerescue.com/images.html?view=1&id=230771&cat=>

Check out the pictures and forward this email to anyone interested. I don't think I would want to own anything that close to the water!

N3RG - Ray

... And Bill replied

Hi Ray, I'm glad you made out OK.. I keep thinking of Harry, W3CL, giving his "health and welfare" report at the club meetings 30+ years ago.. sigh sure hope everyone is physically well.. the hardware can eventually be replaced and as we all know: all the old adages hold true: If your antenna didn't blow down it wasn't big enough and if it DID blow down it will get put back up even BIGGER!! heh heh.. Bill

**10/31/2012 2:34 PM**

My tower did good. That is because I haven't put it up yet. I guess procrastination is a good thing. I did put up a structure last week for housing the equipment at the base of the tower. That fared well and the walls are still standing. Haven't put on the roof. Winds were about 50-55 mph on gusts. We have many trees here and none fell. I think it's because most of the leaves were off. Lost power for three hours.

My condolences to Steve on his tower loss.

Paul WA3GFZ

...Everyone OK? cont'd

**10/31/2012 3:33 PM**

All good at K3IUV. (Only advantage of indoor antennas!). Power out for 6-hrs. Used small inverter from car battery to power a couple of CFLs.

Then Verizon Phone went out (copper connection). Out for about 12-hrs. Back on now. This morning I ventured out. Saw the large phone interface box near Guiseppes had been torn off pole. Probably sheared some wires. It is now "lashed" back to the pole, and all is working.

Had to go to Doylestown to check son's house. Large tree down in front lawn. Rt 202 N still closed at Mechanicsville Rd. A number of smaller roads in Doylestown still closed with trees visible across them. Just had a call from friend in Newtown. Still large parts without power since Monday night. Ditto Southampton.

**Bert, K3IUV**

**10/31/2012 3:52 PM**

Many trees down in Princeton, and most of the town is without power. My office at the University is OK, though. We are safe and essentially "camping out".

**Joe, K1JT**

**10/31/2012 4:11 PM**

We were in Pa Fri to until Tues at my daughter's in Quakertown. Power went out Mon night and is still out as far as I know ( just heard PPL said out until Nov 4 !!!! )

Cambridge did fine but we were expecting the worst living on the water. Most of the dock was under water and about 1/2 of the yard. We have about 6 100 foot tall pine trees close to the house so we were a little anxious being away from the home.

A few big trees down in the neighborhood but not nearly as bad as Pa.

**Walt K3BPP**

**Oct 31, 2012, at 3:52 PM**

We've been 50 hours without power, a giant oak tree fell on my neighbor's house but they all missed mine (and the Jitney!). Fired up new generator, ran it in 20 hours on gasoline to seat the rings, converted it to propane and it's humming along nicely I don't expect to see power until next week sometime, 5 miles south of me is total destruction; houses washed to sea, boats on train tracks, etc ..

**w1rt/john**

**...And Steve replied**

John, You have told me many times that my driveway is not "jitney" friendly as the tree branches hang too low. Well, that is not the case any more. These pine trees self destructed. Glad I had the Kubota to push all of the debris off the driveway.

SMS

**10/31/2012 4:50 PM**

We had the fiercest winds I have ever heard here on the hill, not much sleep Monday night as the gusts shook the house for hours. The center of the storm as it was heading West from PHL passed within 2 miles of here.

I was very concerned about falling trees or a wind gust taking down towers (sorry to hear about Steve) but fortunately none fell on my property. Just some minor wind damage to a cattle fence.

I awoke to a nasty grinding sound on Tuesday morning; it was the township big snow plow truck with blade down on the asphalt clearing debris from the roads. He made quick work of the tree parts.

...Everyone OK? Cont'd

We ran on generator power for about 14 hours but fortunately PPL trucks had been staged nearby on Monday and they were Johnny on the spot Tuesday morning so used little of my fuel supply.

Very thankful to have minimal effect from this one.

Len N3NGE

#### 10/31/2012 4:58 PM

I am pleased to hear that, in general, many of the members faired pretty well in the storm. It is ironic, and relative to where you live, to hear the comments about 50 MPH winds. Out here we consider that to be a bit above breezy! When it gets over 60 we start to pay attention, but then we don't have 50 to 100 foot trees around, nor all the water you folks got dumped on you.

Hopefully, nothing worse than what you guys have already reported. But the news coverage of coastal areas and Breezy Point in NYC is simply awful. Those areas will take years to rebuild.

Randy Bynum, NR6CA

#### 10/31/2012 5:55 PM

Ground strap (1.5 inch copper flashing) coming down from my roof tower broke. While I'm ok this way in the short term, I need this for spring lightning storms.

1296 looper was turned about 15 degrees so it no longer lines up with lower frequency antennas. It may have been off a little before. I know how to fix this but I can't get up there. A bit of a problem to quickly run the bands as I'm no longer lined up when we go from 432 to 1296. Assuming it maintains this misalignment, I should be able to get used to this, just bump the rotor a notch when we go from 432 to 1296.

Bob N2SCJ

#### 10/31/2012 7:18 PM

Nothing much to speak of here - tower was cranked down - no damage. One large branch came down and my son's trampoline blew over. Power never went out.

Jon W2MC

#### 10/31/2012 7:34 PM

I am very sorry to hear of fellow PackRats' damage, particularly the severe damages sustained by Steve W1SMS and Andy WA2FGK. Both of those losses make me feel sick just thinking about them.

Here we had lots of trees down but no real damage. Power is out at the station and probably will be for some time...it took 11+ days for power to be restored after LAST Halloween's storm, and I don't expect any better this time. That is a minor thing, given what others have experienced, but does mean that I likely won't be participating in this weekend's ARRL EME contest.

I hope for a speedy recovery for Steve's and Andy's hardware ills, and for a speedy return of power to those who lost it.

Roger Rehr W3SZ

#### 10/31/2012 8:35 PM

Just getting caught up on email. What a great idea to get feedback from Sandy. Sure hope all are well. Sorry to hear of the worst stories.

I spent the night Monday listening to the wind howling. In the morning no damage to towers or antennas. Very Thankful.

Today was a busy one with Packrats all day. Morning at Dover Downs with Nick and afternoon with JJZ and JEY (and later KA3TUF) Got lots of Packrat projects moving forward.

Phil K3TUF

...Everyone OK? cont'd

**10/31/2012 9:27 PM**

We were lucky. Tower was lowered to where 6m beam was laying on roof. It survived fine. Lost wall mount on spare pole which has 3 antennas on it but no damage. No water.

Not sure about shore property. Still not allowed to go in and check it. Sons boat floated out of the marina.

Was without power for 15 hrs.

Steve sorry about tower.

EI K3JJZ

**11/1/2012 12:30 AM**

Hi all. Sorry to hear about some of the damage, esp Steve losing that tower. A real shame and hard work to replace, etc. Been there, done that. But not this time. I cranked over the EME tower so the antennas were laying flat on the ground and hoped no trees fell on them anyway. No damage to anything here but lots to various places around the area.

A lot of trees down. AC power stopped abruptly about 5:15 on Monday evening and remained out until tonight, about 26 hours. I fired up the little 1 kw Honda generator and used it to keep the fridge alive, a couple lights, and run the TV and the computers a little. Even hooked it up to the gas hot water heater to get enough hot water for a shower. I really need a bigger generator but it did the job well enough.

So all ok here, really. Glad to hear that most of the rats did not suffer too much damage either.

Russ K2TXB

...And Tom W2DRZ asked

Hi Russ, How much gas did you use and how many hours was it used? Missed all the bad weather here in FN02la

...Russ' reply 11/1/2012 10:14 AM

Hi Tom, Bob. My gen is the Honda EU1000 and it runs 8 hours on a tankfull—one half gallon. So did not use a lot of gas, I guess about 4 gallons up until the power came back on last night about 7:00 pm. But the power went back off this morning between 4 am and 5 am, so I am back on the generator now. I ran out to the Staples store this morning and bought a 600 watt UPS and hopefully that will keep the computers running when the refrigerator starts up and spikes the power for about 1 second! I have not had it running long enough to know for sure as yet.

So of course I am wondering why the power went back off. I guess another transformer blew up, probably weakened by the goings on Monday night and Tuesday. Another possibility is that PSEG connected up a line segment that was shorted... Probably never know. Anyway - interesting times. Today I will crank the EME antennas back up and be ready in case the power comes back on.

...Bob N2SCJ replied

FWIW - My Honda EU3000is consumes about 5 gal per day during June Field Day and Sep VHF Mountaintop operations. This includes Air Conditioning or Resistance Heating, Fridge and Radios. I was ready to use it for Sandy, but my power stayed on.



...Everyone OK? Cont'd

**11/1/2012 7:08 AM**

Here on Long Island and surrounding areas, wind & flooding disaster has struck over a wide area as you probably know. Many orders of magnitude worse than '85 Gloria in the past. I wasn't in the direct path that hit New Jersey to my Southwest but recorded an 80 mph blast here Monday evening around 6 PM.

I lost power at 4:20 PM Monday and also cable TV/Internet/phone. I'm now running on gasoline/propane 4 kW generator since Monday so I have heat and refrigeration, etc. I think we'll be out of power for at least a week or more.

Sometime around then my steel mast bent right above the thrust bearing and is leaning over at an angle. It could have been much worse if the mast broke. I had my array pointed NE into the prevailing wind, but the mast bent from the SE wind direction. I see an antenna work party in my future. I will disassemble and lower what I can easily unbolt and then with a Gin pole either pull the mast or cut the mast if I have too. PITA big time! My 146.760/448.825 repeater has survived and has stayed on the air throughout the storm under backup power.

Only other minor damage to trees and some fences, so I consider myself lucky. YMMV.

George, WA2VNV

**11/1/2012 7:33 AM**

I got power back on at my shack, so I will be able to get on 144 MHz EME for the contest this weekend.

Good luck to all, and 73,

Roger W3SZ

**11/1/2012 8:18 AM**

Commercial AC power back in as of 6PM last night. Hurray! Now the cleanup begins.

W1SMS

... And John W1RT replied  
must be nice ..

**11/1/2012 10:12 AM**

Power went out Monday night at 7:30 PM, just as the 6 meter Packrat Net was starting. Needless to say, I did not run the 222.125 MHz SSB net. I still don't have power [PECO's latest estimate for restoration is tonight] but a small generator is keeping the two refrigerators and the all-important XYL flatscreen TV running.

During the storm, a 100 foot pine tree came crashing down in my backyard. Someone upstairs must like me because not any more than a couple of minutes earlier, I was standing in the path to the falling tree. The tree fell in parallel with my Florida Room. It caught the corner of the storage shed but the shed is largely intact until I can fix it in the Spring.

The only ham damage was that the top of the tree caught the 6 meter beam and did a number on the dipoles. I believe I have a spare 6 meter beam ready to assemble and go. The tower and the other 3 yagis are good to go.

Michael KB1JEY

... Everyone ok cont'd

### **11/1/2012 11:12 AM**

As with others, I am seeing ups and downs. Verizon phone (copper feed) went out again last night. Back on about 10am today. Comcast Internet was out this morning, but back on about 2-hrs later. Suspect all of this relates to intermittent power at their central offices, or their local repeater sites.

You have to sympathize with the utilities difficulties, given the magnitude of the storm and resultant damage.

Different topic: I was monitoring the Warminster club repeater on Monday, and heard net control request operators to man (staff) radio operations at one of the 3 local shelters. The only responder at that time was Michelle, KB3MTW (There may have been others later). She went to the shelter at the Council Rock North High School. Kudos to Michelle (and maybe others) for this selfless contribution to the community, and good publicity to the Ham fraternity. Seems to me that more of us should prepare, train and participate in the event of future scenarios?

**Bert, K3IUV**

### **11/1/2012 12:22 PM**

Not good news here at N3FTI QTH. Winds at Allentown airport were recorded at 81mph and we sit much higher than the airport. Met-Ed power was out from 3pm Monday afternoon until 10pm last night. Our 20kw whole house propane generator performed flawlessly.

Five 90' trees down, one hit the house with the very top of the tree, it just took off the gutter and some shingles. The worse was the one that hit the race shop/shack. It took out the entire north east roof and side wall, lucky that I had heavy steel shelving on that side that stopped the tree 7' from the floor or would have lost my motorcycle, 4 wheeler, and my son's race car.

Plenty of water damage to parts stored on the shelving. On the way down the tree crushed the cab and shattered the windshield of my ford F-350 that was parked next to the shop. My 40' Rohn 45 (without antennas installed yet!) survived without any problems.

I can't say more for my insurance company, an adjuster was out in less than 4 hours after I notified them, we reviewed the damages and our coverages. He told me everything was covered and to contact my contractors to get it all taken care of.

**Steve, N3FTI**

**...And Steve SMS replied**

Good to see nobody hurt. A claim to my insurance co. went in yesterday. Suspect it will take a few days as there is a lot of damage here in the region.

GL with the re-build...

### **11/1/2012 3:12 PM**

Lost power about 9pm on Monday night and just got it back about 2pm today. My little 1500 watt generator burns about 1 gallon every 4 hours, but it requires a lot of plug swapping between the refrig, freezer, sump pump, etc., because it is not big enough to power them all at once ;- ) but thankfully it hung in there.

Also some late night fueling's, it only holds 1 gallon. I think maybe it is time to buy a bigger one. It was especially wonderful, because it ran the blower to the gas fireplace so we had some heat. All my antennas made it through fine even though we registered wind at about 80mph, so I'm told. But a lot of tree limbs, etc. to clean up, but fortunately nothing serious.

Now for a hot shower ;-)

**Chris N3PLM**

...Everyone OK? Cont'd

### **11/1/2012 7:33 PM**

Just got phone and internet back, but still no power! Lost power Mon nite at 10 pm. Have house breaker box fed with my 5 kw generator, so life is almost normal, except for fueling the generator. Still no power at work; theirs will probably come back when mine does, so I'm off work till then.

Very sorry to hear about all the damage to Steve's tower and other Packrats who sustained damage.

Antennas are mostly ok. Stayed up all night keeping them pointed into the wind and dealing with a cranky generator. No other damage than some shingles blown off my shed roof and the cap from the stovepipe blew off.

Not sure when the power will come back, hopefully before the only local gas place (Turkey Hill) with generator power runs out of gas or my generator dies! If power not back by Mon. nite I may have to do the net with low power (35w), unless someone with power picks it up.

AI N3ITT

### **11/2/2012 12:49 AM**

Power/phone/internet was restored by 10 PM when I returned from the WARC meeting. Funny thing is that I had done such a good job of providing the XYL with light and television that she did not notice that the neon lights in the switches were back on.

Michael KB1JEY

...And EI replied

Congratulations !!!

It seems like most of the area will be on by Sat.

## **Fixup At KB1JEY's**

K1DS and KA3WXV went to KB1JEY's QTH today (11/3/2012) to assist with a few problems. First we had to replace the 6m beam that was damaged when hurricane Sandy broke a pine limb loose and it tangled with the beam elements and wrecked it. Secondly we needed to re-evaluate the 432 antenna system, as Michael had noticed a high SWR. Thirdly, we encountered a winch problem as the tower was lowered to the ground. The cable end came out of the clamp fixture.

Michael had another 6m beam that was laying outside for the past two years or so, and was quite tarnished. With some good penetrating oil, we got all the U-bolts loosened up and the driven element disassembled. Everything cleaned up nicely with some fine steel wool, and once the tower winch is repaired, it will be tested and then placed into operating position.

The 432 SWR issue was addressed by placing a dummy load at the end of the transmission line to see if this was a problem with the line or the antenna. It did turn out to be the transmission line, and the culprit was a splice where two N-male connectors were joined by a double female N connector. The double-female connector is actually a 2-piece item that had come apart where it had been joined. This type of connector may be useful in some circumstances, but likely it failed due to the movement of the coaxial cables up and down as the tower is raised and lowered each week for contesting and the weekly nets. It was easily replaced, the line and antenna were re-tested and the SWR is now back to a happy 1:1. —K1DS

Here's a shot of KB1JEY's 6 Meter Antenna



...and the tower winch cable



Two piece N-male "barrel" connector. Good in the lab, not in the field.



## Letter to the Packrats

Thanks Packrats! I was selected for the high honor of **the Rover Recognition Award** for 2012!

This award really means a lot to me given the history of the Jitney.

We often will ask "What Would Bill Do?" when faced with one more contact before we leave a site we're already 30 minutes late in leaving ;)

It also melds nicely with my recent considerations of changing the goals for W1RT/R from contest-winning to rare-grid-exploration (though Bill seemed to be able to combine the two, I prefer a less frantic pace).

I'd like to thank everyone for their support, and look forward to working a bunch of you in the future!

**w1rt/john**

## 3456 Upgrade Opportunity

Nick (N3YMS) just pointed out to me that there are some solid state 20 watt amps on ebay. -6 dbm in +43 dbm out. Search for SM3437 and you will find them. Includes Heatsink and runs on +12VDC. Best price is \$187  
73, Phil K3TUF

## **The Wayback Machine**

Gleaned from the pages of  
Cheese Bits, November 1962

(Vol. V Nr. 8)

(Authors comments in *italics*)

- The cover page showed three “cartoons” drawn by Helen. Veteran’s Day, Thanksgiving, and a Dove titled “Pray For Peace Everyday”. *Still apropos. Will we ever get there?*
- Club member Ed Kushner, W3HKZ (Chief Engineer at WCAU-TV) announced a new Radio Club formed at the station. Call sign K3VAN assigned, and “The Station will be operated in the Jan contest by a Rat”. (*Probably Ed!*)
- Riding home from the Syracuse VHF club banquet, Phil, K2ATA hit the car in front of him. K3IUV (*ye author*) was nearby, picked Phil up and waited for the tow truck. Turned out that the metal brake line had cracked! Club received a Thank-You letter from Phil.
- Swap Shoppe offers an S-27 receiver for sale by W3KIZ, \$50. (*That was the first receiver I ever used. Wish I still had it as a nostalgia item.*)
- Navy MARS. The recently established Navy MARS (Military Amateur Radio Service) is described in detail in an article penned by the Director, located in The Pentagon. Approved Amateur applicants will receive a Navy call sign, and a nice certificate.

- The first portion of a lengthy list, identifying the chief Amateur Radio Operator on each US Navy ship (23 shown) was included. Remainder to follow.
- Nice letter was printed in this issue. It was received from K3BPP’s (Walt Bohlman) Mother. She describes Walt’s heavy work load during the past summer, followed by his current attendance at College in Fort Wayne Indiana. That explains Walt’s recent absence from meetings! (*Walt was one of the club’s first student members. Or was he actually THE first?*)
- This issue contained a number of “folksy” comments about members, their families, and activities. Since they may not be of interest to current readers of this column, I’ve omitted them. If interested, visit W3CCX.COM and read the full issue posted there.
- A “cute” poem about Ham Radio was included. Written by Ed Hennegan, K8SDB, it is reproduced as follows:

-1-

I’M A HAM, by Ed Hennegan, K8SDB  
You ask me what I am, I’m a HAM...  
Yes, good old Uncle Sam says, I’m a HAM...  
I know watts and dots and dashes  
And my signal slips and splashes.  
I’m a HAM... I’m a HAM... I’m a HAM...  
I shouted a CQ for Japan

My neighbor answered quickly, "Here I am"

I work all day and I HAM all night

My XYL says my shack's a sight.

But I'm really glad to meet you, I'm a HAM

-2-

My antenna is a roost for the birds

My inductance is induced beyond words

Too much voltage on my heaters

Excess amperage on my meters

And calluses on my seaters.

I'm a HAM... I'm a HAM... I'm a HAM

I QSL for all, that's a fact

But QSL's I never get one back

I rave at Novice's slow CQs

And bow to ancient DOUBLE-UES

But I'm really glad to meet you, I'm a HAM

-3-

My neighbors they all call me "TVI"

When they greet me on the street, they begin to cry

I get Xenie, Troy and Centerville

I think I'll try for Shelbyville

I'm the DX hound of Cincinnati

I'm a HAM... I'm a HAM... I'm a HAM

I "invest" but I don't get my money back

My SWR is 5 to 1

My audio's shot and that's no fun

I'll TALK, just TALK to anyone

I'm a HAM



*thirty*, de K3IUV

## Another Missive from Smel A. Rhat

- Overheard at the VHF Conference:  
"Hurricane Irene gave me a chance to start over (putting up towers and antennas)"
- He may live in a CCR antenna restricted community, but I live in an XYL restricted community."
- "I got out the binoculars and saw that the cables were swapped at the top. I didn't want to climb the tower again, so I just swapped the cables at the bottom."
- "The human ear is a great filter"
- I noticed that three out of three rovers with vans who presented at the meeting have white Ford E-150's.

## ..Strays

The proceedings discs are available for \$5 each plus \$2 postage.

They will also be for sale at the next Packrat meetings.

Send PayPal payment to [W3KM@verizon.net](mailto:W3KM@verizon.net)

or send a check to

Dave Mascaro, W3KM  
1603 MINK RD.

## Events

For inclusion, please direct event notices to the editor.

**EME Contest, 50-1296 MHz (round 2) - Contest** December 1-2, 2012. See <http://www.arrl.org/eme-contest> for details.

**January VHF Sweepstakes Contest** - January 19-21, 2013. Details to follow. Not too early to start planning!

**ARRL June VHF QSO Party - Contest** June 8-9, 2013. The annual Camelback trek. Details to follow.

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

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

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

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

**EME Contest 2.3 GHz & Up Contest** - September 28-29, 2013. Details to follow.

**EME Contest 6M - 23 cm (round 1) Contest** - October 26-27, 2013. Details to follow.

**EME Contest 6M - 23 cm (round 2) Contest** - November 16-17, 2013. Details to follow.

### ... Strays

Folks I seem to have lost my camera at the conference.

Camera was a Casio Exlim 4.0 mpix. Have already called the hotel.

Last place I had it was in the parking lot sun am.

tnx 73 Elliott K3JJZ

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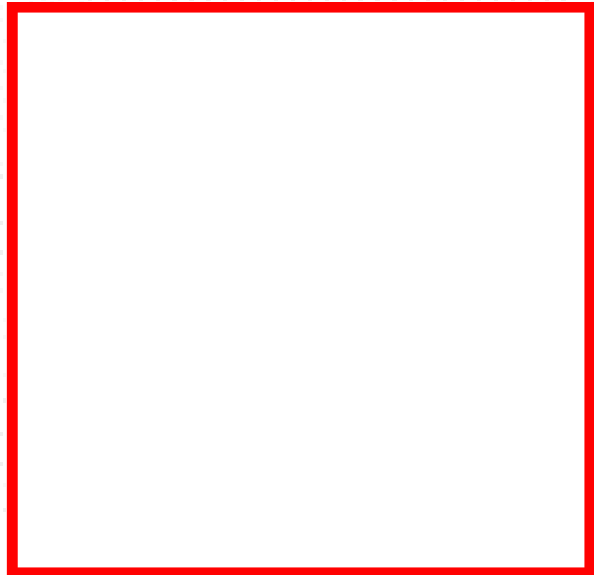
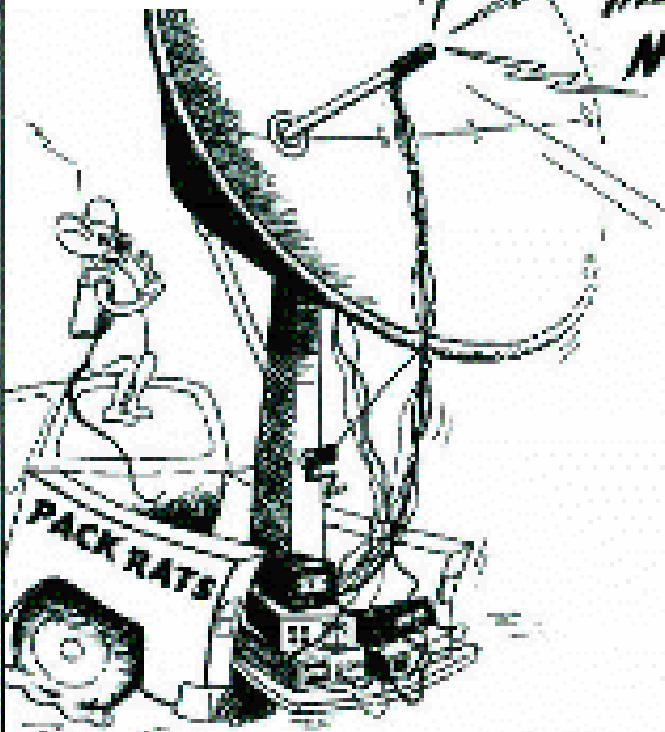
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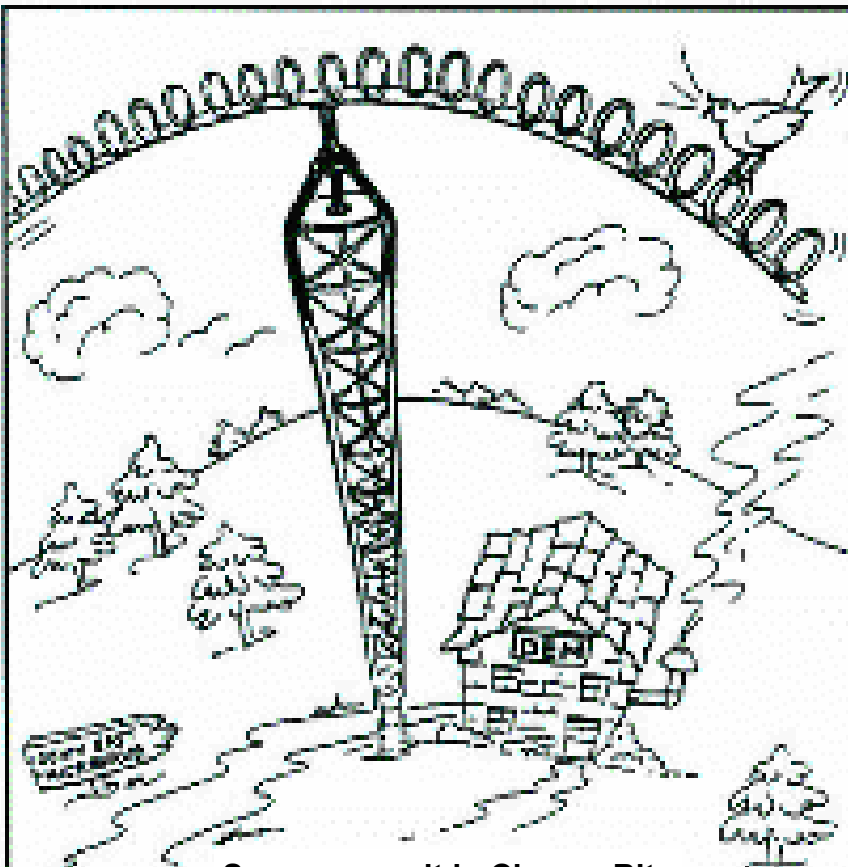
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