



Branch Signals BCARC Newsletter



Meeting Notice

The October, 2002 meeting of the Branch County Amateur Radio Club will be held at 7:00 PM on October 15, 2002 in the basement Training Room of the 911 Center on US 12 west of Coldwater near the airport. Be sure to bring a friend with you to the meeting.

October Meeting Program

The program for the October meeting will be our nearly world famous auction. This is a chance for us all to buy and sell items that have been collecting dust in our shacks and to help the club to earn money for various projects. Jim Voss, W8SST will be our auctioneer and if last year's auction was any indication, a fun time will be had by all. Please see the Auction Rules elsewhere in this issue of Branch Signals.

The 'Big Project', Kalamazoo Style

During the September meeting, Great Lakes Division Vice Director Dick Mondro, W8FQT informed us that the Kalamazoo ARC was working on a project to introduce amateur radio to elementary students in a Kalamazoo school and that our Michigan Section Manager, Debbie Kirkbride had called for fund raising to assist them in their efforts. Our club "passed the hat" and collected \$37.00 that has been forwarded to help interest young Kalamazoo students in amateur radio. Thank you to all who helped out.

Is this something that our club could or should do in Coldwater? Please provide your input to the club officers and/or board members. More information about KARC activities is available at: www.homestead.com/daveandnancy/karc.html.

Random Thoughts...

Ginsberg's Restatement of the Three Laws of Thermodynamics: You can't win. You can't break even. You can't quit.

Law of Selective Gravity: An object will fall so as to do the most damage.

Schmidt's Law: If you mess with a thing long enough, it'll break.

Cannon's Comment: If you tell the boss you were late for work because you had a flat tire, the next morning you will have a flat tire.

October, 2002

WD8KAF Club Repeaters:

147.300 + 100 Hz PL
443.300 +

COMING EVENTS

**October 15th 2002 (3rd Tuesday)
Club Meeting
7:00 PM 911 Center, Basement
Training Room**

**2-Meter Net
Tuesdays 7:00 PM
(Except meeting night)**

Club Officers 2002

President

Larry Camp, WB8R
517-278-0406
wb8r@arrl.net

Secretary/Treasurer

Bill Kubiak, KB8VWI
517-639-4390

Board of Directors

Tom Twite, K8CHS
517-278-1831

Arnold Hayward, NS8T
517-278-8507

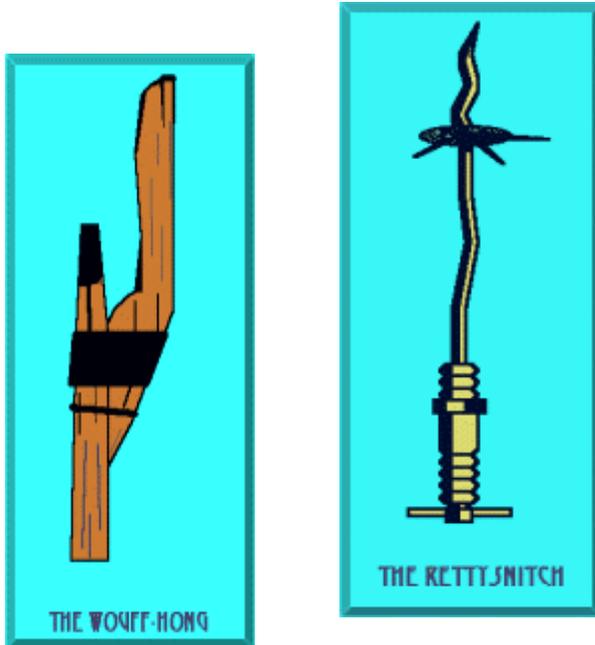
James Voss, W8SST
517-278-4636

Emergency Coordinator

James Voss, W8SST
517-278-4636

The Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch: Lost Traditions?

L. B. Cebik, W4RNL



- "The Wouff-Hong is amateur radio's most sacred symbol and stands for the enforcement of law and order in amateur operation."
- "The Rettysnitch. . .is used to enforce the principles of decency in operating work."

The Radio Amateur's Handbook, 1930, p. 11
In 1930, the Handbook had pictures of both instruments of enforcement. By 1936, only the Wouff-Hong appeared, and by 1947, the Handbook had deleted both photos. Just when we needed traditions of law and order and of decency in amateur operations to guide its growth in the post World-War-II explosion of technology and easier licensing, the symbols had disappeared from view.

Many of today's hams have no idea what a Wouff-Hong and a Rettysnitch look like. To rectify that gap in hamdom's essential history, I have used my very limited CAD abilities to make sketches of the two instruments. Figure 1 is the Wouff-Hong. The two main pieces appear to be wood banded by metal strapping and by heavy wire. What the sketch cannot convey is the darkness at the upper end of the longer wood

piece, as if stained by blood or purified for its grave duties in the fires of purgatory--or both.

Figure 2 is a sketch of the Rettysnitch, an all-metal tool. Of the 5 teeth around the disk near the pointed end, only three remain. According to tradition, the other two have done their work and perished in the effort. Again, my limited skills in rendering the Rettysnitch rob the device of its terrible demeanor, and therefore of its force to ensure operating decency among amateurs.

Perhaps the last time the story of the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch was told was in 1934. Thanks to Ed Guilford, AA7HQ, in Bothell, Washington, I have the May, '34, QST in which Rufus P. Turner--famous in the annals of electronics writings--recounted "Hamdom's Traditions: A Bedtime Story for Young Squirts." But even by Turner's time, the Rettysnitch was relegated to a paragraph on the story's continuation page in the back of the magazine, with no picture. Somehow, even then, folks had forgotten that you can never have law and order without first having decency. Some pessimists think that we now have neither.

I do not subscribe to the pessimist's view. Sure, the number of rotten operators has skyrocketed, but not their proportion to the main corps of good, legal, and decent operators, capable and courteous to a fault. We should not be troubled by the size of the job of curing amateur radio of its illegalities and indecencies, for we have more folks to help use the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch just where and how they ought to be used. No, not on others, but on ourselves--to make sure that we set a model for how amateur operations ought to be conducted.

Turner offers no prescription for using either device, but thought the Wouff-Hong able to beat out King Kong's brains or easily plow up acres of Manhattan bedrock. That will tell you something of the power of these machines. But it won't tell you how they came to be.

Remember T.O.M.--The Old Man--who wrote in earliest days of "Rotten QRM." His very first article in 1917 blasted concocted abbreviations just coming into use. Among the almost unintelligible gibberish in his headphones were words like "Wouff Hong" and "Rettysnitch," surely instruments of terrifying punishment. By mid-1917, ARRL was besieged by orders for these contraptions, orders that could not be filled because the League staff had never seen either device.

In 1919, after World War I (then called simply the Great War since no one could imagine doing all that destruction and killing all over again), the League once more took up its work in earnest. At just this critical time, the Directors received from The Old Man a package containing an authoritative and well-preserved specimen of Wouff-Hong. Turner described the contents of the package as "the gruesome instrument of torture." By order of the Directors, it was hung in the office of the Secretary-Editor, within easy reach. Its first portrait appeared in QST for July that year. At each Board meeting, the Wouff-Hong stood on display, to the blanched looks of the humbled Directors.

The Old Man also presented the world with its first glimpse of the Rettysnitch. In 1921, the monstrous machine was presented to the League traffic manager by the Washington, D.C., Radio Club, ostensibly after receiving it from T.O.M. Even at its first public appearance, two of its teeth were missing, suggesting a long history of necessary and effective use. However, to this day, the Rettysnitch has lost no other teeth. It was ordered to hang by its mate.



In the 20s and 30s, many a reproduction of both instruments, but especially the Wouff-Hong, materialized across the country. (The photograph of one such replica of a Wouff-Hong is courtesy of Joe Holstein, N8EA.) A group of hams in Flint, Michigan, created the mystic society called the Royal Order of the Wouff-Hong. The society endures to this day, according to legends to which I have so far not been privy. And The Old Man has been given a name: Hiram Percy Maxim, W1AW. At least, legend tells the story that way, perhaps based on the fact that T.O.M. glared

at "Kitty" while reflecting on the "rotteness" of everything. Maxim did have a cat. However, true to feline nature, Maxim's cat never spilled the beans.

But what has become of the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch? More important, what has become of their power to enforce both decency and law

and order on the ham bands? Hams used to cringe at the thought, let alone the sight, of these dreadful tools of enforcement. But, we do not hear of them much anymore. Oh, a tremor of curiosity every now and again brings out a ripple of questions and speculation. But not much more than a ripple.

You see, today, we have much more terrifying weapons, things like Oozies and H-booms and the like. They scare us in ways that seem to make the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch tame and toothless. However, even in Maxim's day, objectively more powerful weapons were used in France, like tanques and gas more poisonous than that made by Texas chile. Why were the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch so powerful to those early hams?

Because those hams cared about amateur radio in their hearts. They wanted what they knew they could never have: a perfectly law-abiding and decent radio service that would inspire young and old alike to become hams or, lacking the inclination to electronics, to become admirers of hams. Every minute of on-the-air time was a chance to show how noble a pursuit amateur radio was and should always be. They feared the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch as instruments of their own consciences, as they strove to meet the standards they set for themselves.

And that is where today you will find both the Wouff-Hong and the Rettysnitch--deep in your own conscience. If they seem to hold no power, then you know it is time once more to elevate your standards a notch higher, and then to strive to achieve them perfectly. Each of us has a secret and private office where no one else may go. Above the door, facing our individual operating tables, hang two instruments, one of law and order, the other of decency. However much the outside world may neglect the tradition of these terrible reminders of responsibility, each of us posses our own Wouff-Hong and Rettysnitch. May you never deserve their sting. Like all legends, this one, too, must end with special words: Pass It On.

Nominating Committee

Thank you to Jim Voss, W8SST and Matt Godell, N8JWC for volunteering to be on the nominating committee to locate candidates for the BCARC 2003 Officers and Board Members. The elections will be held at the November meeting.

Club Auction Rules

The president or auctioneer will select a member to keep a record of each item auctioned, who the seller was, who the successful bidder was and how much it sold for.

The seller of an item may specify a minimum bid for the sale of said item. If that price is not reached, the item will revert back to the seller.

10 percent of the auction price of each auctioned item will be donated to the club.

Winning bidders for each item will pay the club treasurer or a person assigned by the president in his absence, in full by cash or check, before taking possession of an item.

If a seller wishes, they may donate to the club the total price paid for an item, or the item itself, if not successfully sold.

No warranty, or guarantee, implied or otherwise, shall be given by the club as to the condition or serviceability of any item.

H.B. Fyfe Murphy's Laws of Computer Programming

- I. Any given program, when running, is obsolete.
- II. Any given program costs more and takes longer.
- III. If a program is useful, it will have to be changed.
- IV. If a program is useless, it will have to be documented.
- V. Any program will expand to fill available memory
- VI. The value of a program is proportional to the weight of its output.
- VII. Program complexity grows until it exceeds the capabilities of the programmer who must maintain it.
- VIII. Any non-trivial program contains at least one bug.
- IX. Undetectable errors are infinite in variety, in contrast to detectable errors, which by definition are limited.
- X. Adding manpower to a late software project makes it later.

Area Hamfests

October 13

Central Michigan ARC & Lansing Civil Defense Repeater Assn. East Lansing, MI
<http://www.qsl.net/lcdra/hamfair2002.org.htm>

Kalamazoo ARC Kalamazoo, MI
<http://www.KalamazooHamRadio.com/hamfest>

October 27

Utica Shelby Emergency Communication Association
Warren, MI
<http://www.useca.org/>

November 4

Blossomland ARA Benton Harbor, MI
<http://www.comdac.com/bara>

November 16-17

Fort Wayne Hamfest & Computer Expo
www.fortwaynehamfest.com

Club CD Sales

Sales of the Club's CD containing newsletters, pictures, meeting minutes and other interesting documents from 1960 to 2001 have been brisk. These CD's are an archive of all the club materials that have been found and is an interesting trip back through the last 41 years of BCARC history. The documents on these CD's are in JPEG format and can be opened by any PC. They are available for \$5.00 and can be ordered from WB8R (burned to order) by sending an email to: wb8r@arrl.net. I will bring your copy to the next club meeting or we can make other arrangements to get it to you.

Ham-Mart

This is a new feature for the Branch Signals newsletter and is intended to be a place for locals to list any equipment that they might have for sale as well as a place to list any equipment that they are interested in purchasing.

As you might expect, the Branch County Amateur Radio Club bears no responsibility whatsoever in regard to any equipment, statements or representations made by owners or purchasers of any items listed in this column. Please email the details of any items you would like to sell to Steve at shadowman405@charter.net or to Larry at wb8r@arrl.net.

No items were listed for sale this month. Must be that everyone is saving their stuff for the club auction!

Simple Ham Email

Ever get tired of trying to remember the email address of hams that you communicate with? Do you want a simple way to receive email from other hams? The ARRL has a deal for you. If you are a member of the League (and you should be), you are eligible to use their email forwarding service that will let you use your callsign@arrl.net as your email address. For hams, I can think of nothing simpler. The League will redirect all emails received to the email address of your choice. This really makes it easy and also somewhat anonymous. See the ARRL website for details and instructions.



Jim Voss, W8SST

Emergency Coordinator's Column

Are you ready to copy?

That was the question asked several times the morning of September 21st at the *ARES, pre-SET, basic formal traffic handling and net procedure* meeting. Club President, Larry, gave his always-outstanding seminar on formal traffic composition and handling. At the completion of

the morning's training, each attendee had the option of sending or receiving a piece of formal traffic just as they would on the air. As a follow up, I "passed" two pieces of formal traffic to those who checked in to the Tuesday Branch County Emergency Net. We'll do that another time or two to get those who are interested a bit more experience before moving up to the statewide traffic nets. Now, the reason we went through all of this was to prime our ARES members for the Simulated Emergency Test, which will take place on the morning of October 5th. Being able to compose, send and receive formal traffic is a prerequisite for serious participation in the test. If for whatever reason you were unable to attend the training and would like to learn the ropes of traffic handling just drop me an email and I'll forward to you some websites with excellent information on that subject. A hearty thanks to Larry, WB8R, for his assistance with last week's training.

Friction?

This is a bit off the typical subject of this column, but I wonder if any of you have been receiving the forwarded emails from ARRL leaders across the country asking to be dropped from K1MAN's email list? You'll remember that our Vice-Director, Dick Mondro, was quoted in one of K1MAN's editorial columns and Dick took exception to the conclusions drawn in that editorial. If you haven't read it as yet you should at [http://members.aol.com/ ht a/K1MAN14275/myhomepage/business.html](http://members.aol.com/ht_a/K1MAN14275/myhomepage/business.html). Anyway, this is an interesting development in the continuing interplay between league officials and K1MAN.

This is a test!

Now, to the subject at hand – the Simulated Emergency Test. I'm not able to clue you in as to what the scenario will be for our annual test, not only because it should be a surprise, but mainly because I have not received the information as of yet! Don't be surprised if it has something to do with terrorism. Other than that I can tell you no more. I can only advise that if you want to be involved, and I certainly hope you will, be listening to the repeater this Saturday morning, or you might get a heads up on WTVB if you're not near your two meter rig. Be prepared with your jump kit, message forms, ARES ID card, pen and pad. If you are an experienced HF traffic handler I'd like you to email me between now and then and tell me you'd like to take traffic to and from the HF nets.

Final thought.

One last thought for this month. If you're called upon to make contact with a served agency official during the SET, let's make a good first impression. Be friendly, but not overly so. Above all, be at your professional best. If we are going to expect these folks to call upon us if the real thing should happen then we'll have to appear to know what we're doing and do it well. Two rules: You only get one chance to make a good first impression and remember to be sincere whether you mean it or not!

Jim Voss, W8SST

Branch County Emergency Coordinator

DX on the Bands



MALAWI, 7Q. Ely, IN3VZE is active as 7Q7CE until October 8. Activity is on all HF bands, including the newer ones, using SSB. QSL to home call.

CHINA, BY. Two groups of operators from four different Chinese provinces are QRV as BI7DX from Weizhou Island, IOTA AS-139, until October 4. Activity is on 40 to 10 meters using CW and SSB. QSL via BA1DU.

ECUADOR, HC. Jorge, HC1JQ will be active in the CQ WW RTTY Contest as a Single Op/Single Band entry. QSL to home call.

SARDINIA, IS0. Giovanni, IZ2DPX will be active as IS0/IZ2DPX/p or IS0/IZ2DPX/m from Baia Sardinia, IOTA EU-025, from September 28 to October 5. Activity will be on 20, 17, 15, 10 and 6 meters. QSL via IK2DUW.

AMERICAN SAMOA, KH8. A multi-national team of DXers will try to be QRV as K8T and K8O from Tutuila, IOTA OC-045, and also from Ofu Island, IOTA OC-077, at the same time. Activity will be on all bands using CW, SSB, RTTY, SSTV and PSK31. QSL via operators' instructions.

NORWAY, LA. LN1HQ will participate in the CQ WW RTTY Contest possibly as a Multi/Multi entry. QSL via LA6FJA.

LUXEMBOURG, LX. Robert, LX1RQ will be active as LX5A during the CQWW RTTY Contest as a Single Op/All Band Low Power entry. QSL to home call.

DENMARK, OZ. Peter, DL4FCH will be active as OZ/DL4FCH from Romo Island, IOTA EU-125, from September 28 to October 4. Activity will be on 80 to 10 meters using CW. QSL to home call.

SUDAN, ST. William, ST0F has been QRV on 15 meters around 1800z. He may also be active on 20 and 10 meters SSB as well. QSL via ZS4TX.

DODECANESE, SV5. Phil, G4OBK is active as SV5/G4OBK from Kos Island, IOTA EU-001, until October 1. He may be giving out a multiplier during the CQ WW RTTY Contest. QSL to home call.

CORSICA, TK. Rudy, OM3PC and Miro, OM5RW are active as TK/OM3PC/p and TK/OM5RW/p, respectively, until September 30. Activity is on 160 to 10 meters using CW, SSB and RTTY. They will be a Multi Op/Single Band entry in the CQ WW RTTY Contest. QSL via operators' instructions.

NORFOLK ISLAND, VK9N. Jim, VK9NS can usually be found using CW between 1000 and 1330z on 40, 30 and 17 meters. After 2130z, he may be QRV on 10 meters using SSB and FM. QSL to home call.

UK SOVEREIGN BASE AREAS ON CYPRUS, ZC4. ZC4DW will be active in the CQWW RTTY Contest possibly as a Single Op, All or Single Band entry. QSL via G0DEZ

