



DIGITAL DISPATCH

A publication of the
West River Radio Club



November — 2008

Volume III—#11

VITAL STATISTICS

The West River Radio Club, an ARRL Special Service Club, was founded in 2004 through the efforts of KA1ZQX, Tim Bell, and N1JSG, Richard Pierce.

Our 52 members pride themselves on belonging to an active and productive organization with involvement in many aspects of this great hobby: public service, special events, Field Day, repeaters, emergency communications, contesting and chasing DX.

Current officers are:

N1TOX, John Borichevsky; President
W1CWB, Chas Baker; VP
KD6MPY, Sean Sanderson; ED/VE Liaison
K1KU, Darrel Daley; Secretary/Treasurer

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Who said it could not be done?

While we keep on growing, our club gets stronger and stronger. Our membership continues to grow because of our achievements, goals, and informative club meetings. Look around at all of the new things we have done and continue to participate in this past year. Ok, this is where I start to cross the lines, so please bear with me... In brief:

CERT (Citizens Emergency Response Team) – Many of our club members belong to CERT. CERT is a program designed to allow the trained general public assist first responders with the small tasks that take them away from the major events. CERT members are trained in CPR, AED, Basic First Aid, small fire control, radio communications, the Incident Command Structure, traffic control and much more.

For more information, please visit <http://www.dps.state.vt.us/vem/cert/>

ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Services) – ARES is a volunteer emergency communication team administered by the American Radio Relay League. Many of our Walk-a-Thons and special events are

handled under this umbrella. Providing radio communications for the public well being is a priority when the need becomes evident.

For more information, please visit <http://ares.n1www.com/>

RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services) – RACES, like ARES, is devoted to health and welfare by providing emergency communications. Our RACES program is headed by a civil authority, in our case, Vermont Emergency Management. The VEM-RACES program has also grown to 200 volunteers' state wide. The RACES program has fixed stations within the Entergy Vermont Yankee Nuclear EPZ, all of the health care offices, and hospitals providing HF/VHF/UHF and digital communications.

For more information, please visit <http://www.dps.state.vt.us/vem/races/>

Ok, so why do I bring these organizations to the table? Many of our members belong to all 3. Taking the practices learned within each organization and applying them during a deployment, we become stronger with our understanding of emergency commands and needs. By learning the Incident Command Structure in CERT, you can apply that knowledge to any ARES or RACES deployments. If radio communications are required, RACES and ARES can step up to the plate and provide that. We have lately added radio communication solutions to the CERT program. So this makes the circle whole. The more we learn, the more we practice, and the more we prepare for, the stronger our team becomes.

A case in point to these statements is the 4 RACES drills we have coming up next year. In preparation for these drills, Mark, KB1HCG and Paul, KB1OQH installed the last of the EPZEOC antennas in Halifax. Prior to this, Mark also installed the antenna at the Bellows Falls Union High School for the Reception Center. By going the extra mile, Mark has finalized the installations for the VY EPZ. Thank you Mark for the professional work you have done and supporting the team.

So who said it could not be done? One organiza-

tion can do multiple things. But beware, the problem comes when a large event happens and we are spread too thin. But looking over the membership we have, I'm impressed with the talent that is out there. Keep up the great work.

I welcome your opinions. Until next month.....
Happy Thanksgiving!!
73

de N1TOX
John Borichevsky – President WRRC

FINANCES

The data below is valid as of the publication of this issue of the Digital Dispatch

43 Full members—9 Associate members
53.49% of the full members belong to the ARRL

Checking = \$1417.28
Cash on hand = \$49.11

RUNNIN' ON EMPTY

Can't we all just get along?

Did you have many Trick or Treaters? We didn't, but we buy goodies anyway, just in case. Then every year we say, "Gee, no one showed up. Now we have to eat all that junk food ourselves." We used to have quite a few kids in the area, but they've all grown up and moved away to places like school, jobs, who knows?



Maybe you still dress up and go out on Halloween night. Hams have been known to do stranger things. On the Green Mountain Net we all used to tease my good friend W1UHY, Norm whenever there was a full moon. We were worried that his wife hadn't given him his medication and that he'd do something foolish like try to fly off of his garage roof. Norm is still alive and well and living in Hobe Sound, FL now. We like to call it *Hobo Sound*. It looks like Helen is still faithful in forcing that medicine down his throat.

Speaking of ghouls and goblins....Make sure that you read the excellent article in this issue by W4RNL, L. B Cebik. It's an excellent account of the history or the Wouff Hong and Rettysnitch.

You don't know what these two items are? Stop now, read the article and then come back here. I'll wait.

Are you back? Good....Then on with the show.

The sad truth is that the Wouff Hong and Rettysnitch need to be used today on a small minority of our Ham community. I've always been fortunate that when I've demonstrated our hobby to a non Ham visitor I've never run across any LIDS (Lousy Inconsiderate Dummies) on the band. They're there, though, and I've often heard them swearing or arguing with someone else about whose frequency it is or other stupid matters.

I couldn't prove it, but I often have the feeling that they're boozed up or just rude and un-cultured people to begin with. Sometimes it may be a Jekyll-Hyde type of affliction. Some drivers are like that – mild mannered humble people everywhere except behind the wheel. I believe that some Hams fit that description...perfect little angels most of the time, but put them in front of a microphone and they find some sort of perceived anonymity and become devils.

Now I don't believe that just knowing the Morse code makes you a better operator, but I do believe that CW operators are, as a whole, more polite. I, at least, haven't heard too much swearing going on in the CW portions of the bands. Granted, the so called *DX Cops* can be annoying at those times when there is a truly rare one out there.

Is there anything a Ham can do about broken rules, foul language, etc? You bet your bippies there is. <http://www.fcc.gov/eb/> is the web site for enforcement matters.



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



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.

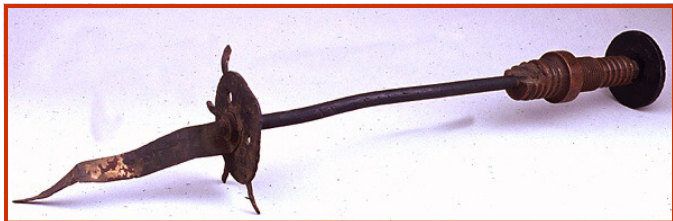


Figure 2 is a sketch of the Rettysnitch, an all-metal tool. Of the 5 teeth around the disk near the pointed end, only three remain. According to tradition, the other two have done their work and perished in the effort. Again, my limited skills in rendering the Rettysnitch rob the device of its terrible 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, 1934, 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 20's and 30's, many a reproduction of both instruments, but especially the Wouff-Hong, materialized across the country. 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 possess 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.

Versions of this item have appeared in 72, the newsletter of the New England QRP Club and in QST, the journal of the American Radio Relay League. Photographs of the Wouff-Hong and Rettysnitch may be seen at the [Sparks Telegraph Key Review](#) pages, along with a vast array of telegraphy keys.

Quote of the Month

In my many years I have come to a conclusion that one useless man is a shame, two is a law firm, and three or more is a congress.

John Adams - US diplomat & politician (1735 - 1826)

FLY ME TO STARS

(Ed: The below is taken from ARRL Space Bulletin 007 ARLS007—Newington, CT October 9. 2008. Wouldn't it be nice if David, N1ESK, got back into the contributor's mode and did some more satellite articles for us? Say **YES**)

On Sunday, October 12, Richard Garriott, W5KWQ, is scheduled to begin his journey to the International Space Station (ISS) as he blasts off into space via a Russian Soyuz and dock with the ISS two days later; he is due to return to Earth on Thursday, October 23.

Richard, the sixth private citizen to be accepted by the Russian Federal Space Agency (RKA) for a short-term mission on the ISS, is the son of Owen Garriott, W5LFL.

In 1983, Owen was the very first ham to make QSOs from space. Richard said he plans to build on his father's legacy by also making QSOs from the ISS: He plans to perform several school contacts and downlink SSTV images during his flight, as well as contact the general ham community in his free time and perform random scout contacts during Jamboree on the Air (JOTA).

According to ARRL Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) Program Manager Rosalie White, K1STO, excitement is building for this launch. "Richard and Owen have been working as a team to plan how to cram in all of the objectives Richard hopes to achieve in space, including scientific experiments."

Through White, Richard and Owen sent this message for all hams: "We are both very pleased and appreciative of the ARISS and ARRL support in making the voice and SSTV ham operations more fun, interesting to the public, and valuable for research on Richard's flight this October. One of the most exciting aspects of living and working in space is the chance to look back at the Earth. Owen had one of the first opportunities to do this 35 years ago on Skylab. He also had the first opportunity to talk with the ham community from space 25 years ago aboard [NASA shuttle mission] STS-9. Richard now has the opportunity to connect with the ham community almost exactly 25 years after his father's shuttle flight and 35 years after Skylab. One of Richard's primary objectives with his flight is to photograph the Earth 35 years after the first orbital laboratory and look for changes on the Earth in the intervening time. While Richard is at the ISS window, he will be operating the amateur SSTV equipment and sending its images down to hams around the world.

THE OLD MAN RE-VISITED

These downlinks can then be sent to an ARISS central repository for delayed and wider use. We further expect to be able to compare many of the images with near simultaneous, handheld, high resolution digital photo images. We are very excited to share this experience with the Amateur Radio community, and thank our fellow hams for their support of this project."

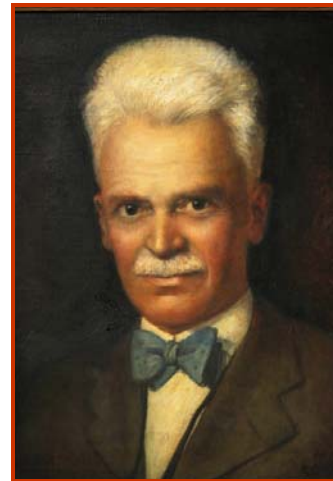
According to White, AO-51 will be operated in a special mode to the ISS this weekend in preparation for Richard's Slow Scan Television (SSTV) operations. "Since Richard wants to experiment with the SSTV equipment on the ISS, a test will take place with AO-51 configured with dual repeaters. This will be during October 11 and 12," White said.

"The primary repeater on AO-51 will be configured with an uplink on 1268.700 FM and downlink of 435.300 FM, and will be designated for this period as an SSTV repeater," reported ARISS Team Member Drew Glasbrenner, KO4MA. "Users are encouraged to exchange SSTV images in ROBOT 36 mode, as an opportunity for others to practice receiving SSTV images from space before the ARISS activity."

The ARISS Team requests that the images hams transmit be related to space and to the ROBOT 36 mode. As always, White said, "good Amateur Radio practice -- including cooperation in sharing the uplink -- is crucial to the success of this test mode." Glasbrenner said that there will be a QRP voice repeater running concurrently on 145.880 FM uplink and 435.150 FM downlink. Users are asked to use 10 W or less, and Omni directional or handheld antennas only. As Richard gets ready for his voyage, he only had kind words to say about the amateur community: "I am very impressed with the ham community and ARISS and how well it puts together such complicated activities! I am very excited about my ham radio part - I hope to perform well."

The Granddaughter of Hiram Percy Maxim, Frances Heminway, lives in Putney and I thought that it would be a nice gesture to send her a copy of our last Digital Dispatch.

She responded with a "thanks and job well done" email and attached a picture of a portrait of her Grandfather that hangs in their home.



UPCOMING EVENTS & LOOKING AHEAD

November 11: Regularly scheduled meeting of the WRRC in the EMT room of Grace Cottage Hospital. The meeting begins at 7 PM. Mark, KB1HCG, will fill us in on the ins and outs on how to save gas.

November 29: Regularly scheduled monthly luncheon meeting at the Pan Asian Restaurant in Brattleboro by Staples. The meeting starts at 11:30 AM

November 8 and 15: Two weekend Technician class—location TBD. For further information contact Sean, KD6MPY at kd6mpy@arri.net

November 22-23: CQWW CW contest. This world wide event sees Hams and DXpeditions from all over the world on the air. Find the rules at <http://www.cq-amateur-radio.com/CQWWDXContestRules8407.pdf>

November 27: HAPPY THANKSGIVING!



HOW'S YOUR ACRONYM IQ? Not mention abbreviations

If you tuned into this column last month you found the following acronyms:



- CTCSS – Continuous Tone-Coded Squelch System
- DTMF – Dual Tone Multifrequency
- AGC – Automatic Gain Control
- SET – Simulated Emergency Test
- LOTW – Logbook of the World

This month let's see how well you do on the following:

AMSAT
5BDXCC
PACTOR
ITU
COR

They're all easy, huh?



SITE OF THE MONTH THE COURAGE HANDIHAM SYSTEM

You can find out all about it at www.handiham.org.

This is an excellent organization in Golden Valley, MN that devotes itself to helping handicapped folks become Hams. Or, if already Hams, it assists them in upgrading and/or furthering their communications skills.

The group both develops or assists disabled Hams with the technological know how and equipment to make their enjoyment of this wonderful hobby more beneficial and enjoyable. This might involve specialized computer software or modified gear for those in need.

There are nets available via EchoLink, summer camps, and classes.

Volunteers and/or donations are always needed. Some few years back I did a recording on cassette of a text for blind students. Advances in this technology now make talking into a microphone obsolete.

So check them out. You just might see some way that you can become involved in helping a fellow Ham with your volunteer services.



IT'S COMING UP

Our annual dinner, that is. Can you believe it, this will be the 5th one. Like the Ever Ready battery, we just keep going and going.

The date will probably be December 13, but that's not etched in stone as of right now. Stay tuned for a bulletin advising you of all the details.

If you've never attended one of these gala events this is the year to try it. There's a small mini ham fest in which some members lay out their priceless treasures (AKA junkie) for sale. A pot luck lunch is had followed by a short meeting in which the officers for 2009 will be elected.

In the meantime here are some pictures from prior annual meetings.

Mark, KB1HCG, checks the roster



N1HXC, Scotty
W1CWB, Chas
KB1J, Rich

KD6MPY, Sean
AA1T, Grant



CUL es 73 de K1KU SK

