



Second Century

Farewell, 2022

We hardly knew you! It's just natural as we get older that time seems to fly by faster with each progressive year, but 2022 went by remarkably fast. As I now do each December, let me reflect on some of the things that ARRL accomplished over the past year.

First and foremost, we returned in a big way to in-person events. We held the ARRL National Convention at Orlando Hamcation® in February, and it was very well attended. In May, Dayton Hamvention® was back to its fighting weight with the crowds returning, and living up to its billing as the largest annual gathering in amateur radio. We also enjoyed the large crowds and had great engagement with members at SEA-PAC (Oregon) in June, the Huntsville Hamfest (Alabama) and Northeast HamXposition (Massachusetts) in August, and Pacificon (California) in October. These events are critical to maintaining and building on our community, transcending the airwaves to reinforce the relationships, friendships, and knowledge-sharing that form the foundation of our community.

The big surprise for me was attending HAM RADIO in Friedrichshafen, Germany. I had never attended, so I wasn't sure what to expect. When we talk about our membership numbers hovering around 160,000, we often fail to identify that thousands of our members are international! That became immediately apparent once the show was open. Our overseas members were excited to see us, renewed their memberships, and even joined Diamond Club. The line for DXCC card checking was remarkably long throughout the first day of the show. It is clear that ARRL is valued globally for its mission, programs, and products.

This year, we made progress in all our areas of outreach, including Field Services, EmComm, Education and Learning, and even social media. We've continued to build strong relationships with the YouTubers who have a presence in amateur radio. The ARRL Lab continues to evolve with new staff, the Clean Signal Initiative, and our ongoing development of the station of the future, the ARRL Radio Laboratory — W1HQ. We have big plans for expanding the Teachers Institute and attending national conferences for teachers to bring amateur radio into more classrooms and youth experiences, bolstering our commitment to STEM and STEAM education opportunities, and our development of the next generation of radio technologists and communicators.

In the spring, we chipped away at the aging information systems portfolio at ARRL by replacing our membership system that was over 2 decades old. Trying to weave new technologies with old is never easy, and the hyperbole that blasted out into social media of course did not reflect the reality of the planning and training for, and implementation of, the system. We have more systems that require attention, most especially our website. We are a small organization, and large-scale projects are challenging. But as our outstanding Member Services team showed us for many weeks, keeping

a positive attitude and taking on the challenges of the day professionally and with good humor are what keep us thriving.

To that end, we continue to work on the culture of ARRL HQ, the ARRL Board, and the community at large. This is important for a few reasons. First and foremost, whatever the hobby is to you — a pastime, a form of public service, a technical pursuit — it is something all of us do as an avocation. Nobody wants to stay engaged with something that brings dissatisfaction, conflict, and angst into their lives. I get email from those hams as they leave. I recently spoke at Pacificon during our ARRL Member Forum. What did I see as I looked out into the audience? Kids! Young hams! Messaging to young people cannot be acrid and offensive. Our behavior — in person, online, and on the air — must reflect a community committed to welcoming others, and growing. Let our association as ARRL members reflect the very best of amateur radio: who we are, and what we do.

This last year, we have laid a significant foundation for what's ahead. As we roll into 2023, you are going to see a bright spotlight focused on volunteerism in amateur radio, and especially ARRL. We have reached a point of crisis in our community regarding the pool of volunteers who are ready, willing, and able to fill important posts — most especially our Section Manager positions. We know the challenges of serving as a volunteer. In many ways it is thankless, but we also know it is extremely rewarding. The positive feedback we get every day from members, as well as the energy of working alongside our volunteers, powers us at HQ.

Next year, I am going to ask you — all year long — to reach just one rung higher. If you're in a club, serve the club. If you serve the club, lead the club. If you lead the club, volunteer for a position or appointment in the ARRL Field Organization. If you're already there, run for Section Manager, Vice Director, or even Director! If there are circumstances that preclude that, then please consider joining Diamond Club and put your money to work in the ARRL General Fund, helping to guarantee the future of ARRL and amateur radio.

Be radio active, get other people active, and be that shining light in these coming dark days of winter.

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