

2014 2nd Meeting
ARRL Board of Directors
Hartford, Connecticut
July 20, 2014
Report of the Chief Operating Officer – Document 8
Submitted by Harold Kramer WJ1B

Executive Summary

Driven by the ARRL Centennial, it's been a busy six months for the ARRL and for Amateur Radio. ARRL Membership is at a record high (for recent times) with more than 164,300 members at the end of June. New Amateur licenses issued, exam sessions and upgrades are all up compared to 2013.

The Centennial QSO Party has been a success. The W1AW/x event has logged almost two million QSOs. LoTW exceeded 100,000 active certificates. After a tough couple of months without a Contest Manager, we hired a new Contest Manager. DXCC paper processing time has remained at three to four weeks since the beginning of the year even though applications have increased.

We met our advertising sales goals for the first six months but wholesale book sales have been soft as explained in Business Service's report. Publications exceeded its gross revenue target driven by the new *Ham Radio License Manual* and the sale of about 1,000 ARRL/Vibroplex Centennial keys.

We conducted a Teacher's Institute here at HQ with another one to come right after the Convention. The ARRL Lab completed an extensive upgrade of its product review test equipment and it renovated its entire physical facility. As Dave Sumner noted in his report, we have completed extensive updates to the interior and exterior of the building including new wall displays for Publications, Development, Education, and DXCC. The building has been dressed up with new exterior panels emphasizing the five pillars. The facility now looks great and I hope that Board members have a chance to see it while you are here.

The HQ staff has worked hard planning The ARRL National Centennial Convention at the Convention Center and at both the Headquarters building and W1AW. This has been a team effort and I want to especially note the contributions of: Bob Inderbitzen, Convention Manager; Dan Henderson who has managed all of the forums; Debra Jahnke who has dealt with and coordinated over 100 exhibitors; Lisa Kustosik who has coordinated the hospitality accommodations; Mike Corey for the transportation and security arrangements; Sharon Taratula for managing the HQ tours and volunteers; Alli Barbieri for the producing the Convention web site and program guide; Diane Petrilli for managing the registration functions; Joe Carcia for coordinating the W1AW visitors and guest operators; Sue Fagan and Diane Szlachetka for their work creating the graphics and displays; and Margie Bourgoin who has provided invaluable administrative support. This has been a massive effort and I am proud to work with such a dedicated and competent group of staff members to make it happen.

ARRL VEC PROGRAM

Maria Somma, AB1FM, ARRL VEC Manager

The ARRL VEC program continues to maintain its dominant position. In the first half of 2014:

- New Amateur licenses issued are up by an incredible 26% compared to 2013.
- Upgraded Amateur licenses are also up in 2014 by an unprecedented 17%.
- The ARRL VEC market share of total Amateur Radio exams administered is at a stable 75%.
- 24,381 total license application forms were filed compared to 20,277 in 2013 up a notable 20%.
- A total of 3,906 exam sessions were administered in the first 6 months of 2014 compared to 3,571 in 2013.
- 23,097 exam applicants were served in 2014, up a remarkable 21% from 19,073 in 2013.
- Exam elements administered increased 23%, from 24,682 last year to 30,268 this year.
- 1,026 new Volunteer Examiners (VEs) have been added to our program.
- We continue to provide QST Exam Info column biannually in January and July, publish the VE Honor Roll quarterly, the Silent Key column monthly in *QST*, distribute VE Newsletters via email and manage the Extra class license certificate program.

We believe that the significant boost in VEC activity is due to increased interest in Amateur Radio Public Service Communications and enthusiasm generated by the Centennial. The ARRL VEC will celebrate its 30th anniversary on July 21, 2014.

Education Services

Debra Johnson, K1DMJ, Manager

License Instruction and Instructor Support

We produced a *new Instructor Manual for Technician License Courses* that coordinates with ARRL's new edition of the student study manual, the *Ham Radio License Manual*. The instructor manual was published in June on the ARRL website, available free to ARRL registered instructors. We also produced a winter and spring issue of "Radio Waves." The spring issue generated more than 130 new license instructor registrations. Circulation is now 9,000 plus members.

Education & Technology Program

We finalized plans for three sessions of the Teachers Institute in 2014, including two sessions of the TI-1, the *Introduction to Wireless Technology* and one session of the TI-2 on the topic of *Remote Sensing and Data Gathering*. The latter will be held at headquarters during the week prior to the Centennial. We filled all 34 seats available in the three sessions and once again had to turn away applicants. We are introducing two new instructors during the Teachers Institutes this year, Larry Kendall, K6NDL of Apple Valley, CA and Bill Richardson, N5VEI of Madison, MS.

Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS)

The international program team successfully executed 11 US and 23 international school contacts during the first half of 2014. A new ham video transmitter developed by AMSAT Italia and the European Space Agency was installed in the Columbus module of the ISS, and was tested and successfully commissioned in May.

NASA's support for the ARISS program has been considerably reduced during the past two budget cycles due to budget cuts from Congress. Piecemeal funding was patched together to support operations through the end of fiscal year 2013-2014 (thru September 2014) to save it from shutdown. Funding for fiscal year 2014-2015 is being sought from various NASA departments that have expressed interest in seeing the program continue. Solicitation of proposals from US schools has now been on hold for a year. We hope that funding can be confirmed and a NASA sponsor identified so that we can begin accepting proposals for US school contacts in early 2015.

Advertising/Business Services

Debra Jahnke, K1DAJ, Business Service Manager

The Business Services Department met its six month advertising sales goals.

The Department currently has 155 exhibitor booth spaces occupied by 114 vendors at the ARRL National Centennial Convention. All spaces are sold out. Exhibitor booth acquisition revenue stands at \$31,026 over the goal of \$25,000.

Dealer sales for the first 6 months of 2014 are \$106,000 lower than they were for the same timeframe in 2014. The difference is due to Baker and Taylor orders. Due to payment issues, we did not process any orders during the first quarter of the year. Once the payment issues were resolved, it took a while to receive any orders at all and they have been very small orders. We did not see our usual order of 700 new license manuals either. It will be several months before we see if our sales volume will recover with this company. Prior to the payment issues, they had been consistently been in our top five wholesale clients. In addition, our brick and mortar clients are reporting sluggish sales.

Marketing and Membership Services

Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R Department Manager

Diane Petrilli, KB1RNF Membership Manager

Jackie Ferreira, KB1PWB Product Marketing Specialist

Yvette Vinci, Customer Service/Circulation Manager

Steve Capodicasa, Warehouse Supervisor

National and Regional Conventions

Much of the Department's staff has been closely involved with the planning and implementing the National Centennial Convention here in Hartford and at Headquarters. They have managed all phases of the convention planning including registration, meals, marketing, and events.

The Department has been extremely busy organizing and implementing ARRL's exhibits at the Regional Centennial Events. The regional conventions to date have included Hamcation in Orlando, Florida, Hamvention in Dayton, Ohio, SEA-PAC in Seaside, Oregon, and Ham-Com in Plano, Texas. ARRL's participation at each of these events has been very successful—presentations, networking, membership, and publication sales. The Huntsville Hamfest in Alabama (August) and Pacificon in San Jose, CA (October) will follow. The ARRL warehouse team helped assemble all of the materials and associated transport for ARRL's exhibits at these events.

Bob Inderbitzen, Dan Henderson, Norm Fusaro, Dave Sumner and Jay Bellows all helped represent ARRL at the International Exhibition of Radio Amateurs in Europe, held in late-June.

Membership

We ended June with 164,390 members, a new high for the past 17 years. We are now 1,790 members over goal year-to-date. We attribute some of this gain to excitement surrounding the Centennial year and a higher number of new licensees to solicit.

Publication Sales

Year to date gross sales are \$1,636,617, ahead of forecast by \$51,991, though these figures include gross sales of the ARRL Centennial Vibroplex Key, 691 units. Removing these sales would result in a loss of approximately \$90K year to date. We anticipate selling 1,000 total keys by year end.

Sales of the 2014 *Handbook* were largely enjoyed in late 2013, selling out of the hardcover edition by Dec 2013. Sales of the new third edition *ARRL Ham Radio License Manual*, introduced in May, have exceeded forecast. Other new titles have not performed as well as predicted. The new *Repeater Directory* was introduced with a companion app for Android devices. These sales are on target. The 2014 Field Day product line sold \$75,761 worth of merchandise this year, slightly ahead of last year. Sales of Centennial-related merchandise have also been very good.

Publications

Steve Ford, Publications Manager

The new editions of the *Ham Radio License Manual* and the *Tech Q&A* were both released on time to an enthusiastic response. The *Ham Radio License Manual* included a promotion for our new Exam Review website that offers convenient online practice exams. The new *Repeater Directory* Android app debuted with the new edition of the *Repeater Directory* and was well received. We hope to have the iPhone version ready by September. We have also wrapped up a new book, *Arduino for Ham Radio*, which went to press July 1. The *2015 ARRL Handbook* is presently in its final stages and will go to press by mid August.

MVP

Dave Patton, NN1N, Department Manager

Sharon Taratula, Operations Manager

Staffing

The Contest Manager position has been filled by Matt Wilhelm, W1MSW, who started on Thursday, July 3. MVP has one additional vacant full time position for an MVP Associate.

Awards

DXCC paper application processing time is at four weeks. LoTW processing time is three business days. Both the W1AW/x operations and the Centennial Points Challenge have been judged a success. The W1AW/x operations have already made more than 1,850,000 QSOs. We anticipate nearly

3 million QSOs made with the W1AW portable stations by the end of the year. We believe that this will create a surge of WAS applications and award requests during the second half of the year and into 2015.

Contest Branch

The Contest Manager position became vacant in mid-January. Since then, former Contest Branch Managers Dan Henderson, N1ND, Sean Kutzko, KX9X, Ward Silver, NØAX, MVP Manager Dave Patton, NN1N, and MVP Associate Kathy Allison, KA1RWY, have kept the work of the Branch on track. QST deadlines have been maintained and contest events have been implemented as planned. Recovering from the contest workload backlog and keeping-up thereafter was accomplished through the assistance of Sharon Taratula, Sabrina Jackson, Sani Zanicovic, Dan Wall, Gloria Flores, Effie Mangllara and Kathy Bouchard, Joe Carcia, and Scott Gee.

Emergency Preparedness

The ARRL Emergency Preparedness Program has continued working with FEMA on the updated memorandum of agreement that will be signed at the ARRL National Convention. The final draft MOA has been sent to the ARRL Board for review. The Department has also taken over administrative duties of the on line courses, EC-001 and EC-016.

Field Organization

The Field Organization Team continued its mission to provide administrative support and guidance to 7,800 ARRL Field Organization appointees and Section Leaders. During the first half of 2014, five balloted Section Manager elections took place, and eight new Section Managers have started their first terms of office.

The ARRL Lab

Ed Hare, W1RFI, Lab Manager

The Lab has installed all of the major pieces of test equipment that were included in the capital plan including a new Agilent AT9020A-MXA 26 GHz spectrum analyzer. The Lab also purchased a fully calibrated used Rohde and Schwarz spectrum analyzer with the low-noise and tracking generator options. This will serve as an additional backup to the testing capability, while simultaneously extending the Lab's capability to make EMC measurements. The Lab was also successful in obtaining an excellent deal on the phase-noise test setup. It purchased a Rohde and Schwarz FSUP-26 phase-noise measurement set at a significant discount. The Lab will next purchase the updated version of National Instrument test software and integrate it into new computers for its screen-room testing process.

The Lab has also been making measurements of grow lights, now finding that four different units tested were above the FCC limits. The Lab provided professional test reports to ARRL General Counsel Chris Imlay, who filed a formal complaint with the FCC.

The Lab staff has been busy getting ready for the Centennial convention. Ed Hare and Mike Gruber are doing presentations on Thursday and Saturday. Ed is going to be at the ARRL Lab flea-market tables on Friday and Saturday. Ed, Mike, Zack Lau, Bob Allison and Tony Nesta, along with a number of volunteers are going to fully staff the Lab during the Centennial tours. Among the exhibits planned are a vintage equipment display in Lobby and in the Lab, a software-defined radio exhibit, an exhibit of Oscar 1, an exhibit of D-Star, a demonstration of our noise-measurement capability and, of course, all of the new equipment proudly displayed in the screen room.