ARRL Board of Directors 2019 Annual Meeting

From IARU Secretary David Sumner, K1ZZ

To the ARRL Board of Directors:

In recognition of the ARRL’s role as the International Secretariat of the International Amateur Radio Union, the IARU President is invited to attend or to send a representative to meetings of the ARRL Board. President Tim Ellam, VE6SH, generally attends although occasionally he will ask either the Vice President, currently Ole Garpestad, LA2RR, or the Secretary to attend on his behalf. This will be the first ARRL Board meeting I have attended since retiring as ARRL Chief Executive Officer in April 2016. I became IARU Secretary in October 2016, regaining as a volunteer a title I had held previously on two occasions and for a total of 19 years while serving as ARRL General Manager, Executive Vice President and CEO.

The IARU was founded in 1925 at the initiative of Hiram Percy Maxim, who saw the need for an entity to represent amateur radio globally in order to protect the interests of radio amateurs both here and abroad. Governance of the IARU has evolved over time, the most recent major change occurring in 1984 with the adoption of a new Constitution that among other things formally recognized the three regional IARU organizations and established an Administrative Council (AC) consisting of the three officers and two representatives from each of the regional executive committees. The AC sets policy and coordinates the work of the regions.

While there are more than 160 member-societies of the IARU representing as many countries and separate territories, the ARRL is unique among them in both its responsibilities and its prerogatives. The IARU Constitution spells out the obligations of the International Secretariat; in exchange for performing them, the ARRL has the right to designate the IARU Secretary and to nominate candidates for President and Vice President after consultation with the Administrative Council. For the five-year terms beginning in May 2019 that consultation began in September 2017 and concluded in September 2018, the result being the nomination of the incumbents for an additional term. The member-societies currently are in the process of voting on proposals to ratify the nominations; how the ARRL will vote is on the agenda for your meeting.

Tim and Ole are outstanding colleagues and the universal opinion of those who work with them is that we are most fortunate that they are both willing to serve an additional term. However, they have made it clear that it will be their last. The Administrative Council has identified succession planning as a high priority, not only with regard to IARU governance but also in identifying technically qualified volunteers to represent the amateur and amateur-satellite services in international forums including, but by no means limited to, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Succession planning is also necessary for the position of Secretary. I have been continuously involved in the IARU since joining the full-time ARRL staff in May 1972. I turn 70 in three months, and while I am blessed with good health there will come a time when the ARRL will need to designate my successor. The right to designate the Secretary ensures that the ARRL can always have a voice and a vote on the AC.

Spectrum protection at the international level is the primary mission of the IARU, not only defending our allocations but also trying to minimize spectrum pollution that raises the noise floor and reduces their usefulness. Historically this has involved participation in the work of the ITU Radiocommunication (ITU-R) and Development (ITU-D) Sectors as a Sector Member; our ITU involvement is still necessary but is no longer sufficient.

ITU-R work follows a cycle of approximately four years beginning with a two-day Conference Preparatory Meeting (CPM) held immediately after a World Radiocommunication Conference. For example, CPM-1 for WRC-19 was held in November 2015 at the conclusion of WRC-15 and assigned responsibility for studies relating to the WRC-19 agenda items to the appropriate Working Parties of the ITU-R Study Groups. The Working Parties and Study Groups also work on Reports and Recommendations that are not directly related to WRC preparations. The Working Parties typically meet twice a year for as long as two weeks, usually in Geneva, to consider contributions (documents) submitted in between meetings. IARU representatives must participate in several Working Parties to ensure that our interests are protected.

A second CPM lasting two weeks is held about eight months prior to a WRC. This is a major meeting, the purpose of which is to finalize a massive technical report that has been drafted by the Working Parties over a two-year period. The English version of the draft report is 780 pages long and sets out the rationale for various methods of satisfying the WRC agenda items along with the advantages and disadvantages of each. The ITU is obliged to provide the report in all six official languages of the UN. Every comma of the draft has been debated in the Working Parties and will be debated all over again at the CPM, which begins on February 18 in Geneva. Ole Garpestad (as a member of the Norwegian delegation) and I will be there along with others representing amateur interests.

The WRC itself begins on October 28 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt and will last four weeks. I believe you will hear from Jon Siverling regarding the agenda items of concern to us, so I will not repeat the information here. However, I should add that Ole Garpestad has been coordinating the efforts of two dozen volunteers who have devoted much of their time to conference preparation over the past three years.

Past ARRL President Rod Stafford, W6ROD, who is my predecessor as IARU Secretary, represents the IARU in ITU-D where our focus is on gaining recognition for amateur radio’s capacity to contribute to disaster communications and hands-on training. From time to time it is possible to arrange for ITU-D sponsorship of an Amateur Radio Administration Course for telecommunications administrators in developing countries. It is worth noting that at last year’s ITU Plenipotentiary Conference the Member States elected Doreen Bogdan-Martin of the United States to serve as Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau for the next four years. Not only is Doreen the first woman ever elected to a leadership position in the 153-year history of the ITU, she is also KD2JTX and an ARRL member.

Earlier I mentioned that it is no longer sufficient for the IARU to be engaged with the ITU. There are two additional categories of forums that now must also concern us: regional telecommunications organizations (RTOs) and international standards organizations.

There are six RTOs encompassing most of the world:

APT – Asia-Pacific

ASMG – Arab states

ATU – Africa

CEPT – Europe

CITEL – Americas

RCC – Commonwealth of Independent States (of the former Soviet Union)

It took some effort over a period of years, but the IARU is now able to attend meetings of the RTOs and to participate in their work, which goes on in parallel with the ITU-R Working Parties. Their objective is to develop positions on the WRC agenda items that are supported by a sufficient number of countries to become Common Proposals. In general, if a method of addressing an agenda item is not supported in some form by most of the RTOs it is not going to adopted at the WRC; most of the discussion at the WRC will be to refine the details in order to reach a consensus. It is important to make our case to the RTOs early and often. In this regard Jon Siverling’s efforts as a regular member of the US delegation to CITEL are particularly helpful.

By far the most active of the RTOs is CEPT, which has a complex structure for WRC preparation. IARU Region 1 is responsible not only for covering dozens of CEPT meetings but also for ASMG, ATU, and RCC. Our European colleagues definitely shoulder a fair share of the burden.

The standards organizations that concern us are those that set limits for radio frequency emissions by non-radio devices, particularly CISPR – the International Special Committee on Radio Interference. While the IARU has participated in CISPR for many years, recently we have had to increase our involvement because of developments such as wireless power transfer for electric vehicles (WPT-EV). It is essential for the major IARU member-societies including the ARRL to be heavily involved in the national standards organizations that participate in CISPR such as the American National Standards Institute and to coordinate their efforts through the IARU. IARU Region 1 has been particularly active in this area and is seeking greater assistance from the other regions.

Another group of IARU volunteers who carry on important work is the IARU Monitoring System (IARUMS), sometimes still called the “Intruder Watch” as it was when created at ARRL/IARU Headquarters in the 1960s. While each of the three IARU regional organizations has a Monitoring System Coordinator and every member-society should have one, the most work by far is being carried out by volunteers in Europe. IARUMS has developed an impressive ability to identify emission types and sources of interference from non-amateur stations in the exclusive amateur HF bands. More support of these efforts by qualified and properly equipped volunteers in the US, coordinated by the ARRL, would be welcomed.

While I perform most of the functions of the International Secretariat from my home, the support of the ARRL staff remains essential and is sincerely appreciated. This includes Carla Pereira, who ensures that any mail and faxes received for the IARU reaches me reliably and quickly; Sue Fagan, whose design talents brighten the IARU “brand”; Diane Middleton and her staff, who are both meticulous and prompt in processing expense reimbursements for IARU volunteers, often involving multiple currencies; Norm Fusaro and his staff, who handle the IARU Worked All Continents Award and the IARU HF World Championship contest; and the IT staff, who demonstrate infinite patience in solving any problem I dish up for them. Very soon we will be transitioning to a brand new web site design and structure for all four of the IARU sites: [www.iaru.org](http://www.iaru.org) and each of the three regions. The way we are going about it should keep the demand on IT staff time to a minimum but I am certain to need their assistance along the way.

I hope to be able to answer any questions about the IARU that you may have, either during the meeting or at any time thereafter.

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