To: The ARRL Historical Committee

In light of the impending centennial of the ARRL, it is an appropriate time for the Historical Committee to review its purpose.

The policy underpinnings for this committee are thin. The committee was created as a temporary one in 2000 on the motion of Director Jim Maxwell but became permanent somewhere along the way. Although Dave and I cannot locate any formal Terms of Reference for the committee, at Minute 54 of the July, 2001, Board meeting this follow-up motion was adopted:

54. On motion of Mr. Maxwell, seconded by Mr. Harrison, it was unanimously VOTED that the following resolution is adopted:

“BE IT RESOLVED: The ARRL Board of Directors believes that the “past is prologue to the future.” We acknowledge the linkage between Amateur Radio’s long and creative history and the development of modern communications technology. Such technology has made a major contribution to modern life. Therefore, we endorse a firm commitment to preserving the history of Amateur Radio and its connection and contribution to modern technology through the preservation of ARRL archives, historical records and collection of historical objects. By preserving the past, we are looking toward the future. This forward looking commitment is for the benefit of contemporary scientific researchers, experimenters and historians as well as for the Amateur Radio community itself.”

Beyond that general statement, there appear to be few, if any, Board-approved policies about the historical collection and its purposes. For example, there are no policies about acquiring and disposing of items in the collection or about appropriate use of items in the collection (such as publication of images and documents or loaning of items) by entities other than the ARRL.

The Board members, Staff members, and volunteers who serve on the committee deserve better guidance than they have at this time. This is not to be taken in any way as a criticism of past or present members and chairs of the committees but simply to recognize a fact that motivates us to improve the situation.

New committee chair VP Bellows and the other members of the committee are requested to review the committee’s purposes and draft Terms of Reference to guide the committee’s work into the League’s second century. In addition, the committee is requested to draft policy guidelines about the issues noted in the first paragraph, above, and about any other relevant policy-related issues they may identify. These drafts should be presented to the Board for consideration and adoption in July, 2012, if possible, or in January, 2013.

Thanks very much for your service on this committee, and please let me know if I can clarify anything in this memo to help you get this work under way.

73 – Kay N3KN