

**Report of the President
2009 Annual Meeting
Windsor Locks, CT
January 16-17, 2008**

It is, as always, my pleasure to submit a written report to the ARRL Board in order to provide a perspective to you that is sometimes different than what you see from your vantage point. It is my hope that this perspective will assist you, as a Board, in developing the policies that will continue to shape our course and maintain the positive direction we have guided the Amateur Radio Service in for almost a century.

Prior to each Board meeting I sit down, usually in the quiet evening hours in my study, and reflect on amateur radio's past, present and future while developing my thoughts about what I want to say to you as a Board to facilitate a positive thought process going into our board deliberation and debate.

This time has been quite difficult; in fact it has been impossible for me to focus on the issues awaiting us in Newington as a Board. Not because we are facing some unprecedented time or event that will potentially impact our future....that is always the case, but because one subject and one subject alone has burdened me for several months now and it has festered to the point that I must address it in my written report..

That subject is ethics.

Since my election as President in January 2006 there have been no less than five instances where I had to become involved in a situation in order to address the actions of a Director or Vice Director. These situations ranged from interaction with staff, not following explicit board instructions (and the law!) on confidentiality concerning employment matters to unethical involvement in the election process. What seems to aggravate the situation is that the individuals involved, despite peer opinion to the contrary, expressed an opinion that their actions were OK and they had done nothing wrong.

Possessing an idea that "I didn't want to violate any rule, but rather see how far I could go without crossing the line" or "I didn't want to cross the fence, but I did want to see how far I could move it" are **just plain wrong and unacceptable!**

As President of this organization, one of my responsibilities is to be the spokesperson for the board. In that capacity, I will speak to you and tell you that your fellow Directors are not pleased with some of the actions of a few of you. Whether they will say so publicly or not is irrelevant. They share a concern about some recent events and we should all pay attention. I realize you are passionate about amateur radio and ARRL and can sometimes get excited about things and go a bit overboard. Guess what? We all are! None of us

would be here if we weren't. But there is a line, way before crossing, that we must never get close to.....period!

Consider this.....and consider it seriously. It will take only one, **only one**, serious ethics issue to tarnish this organization, and possibly amateur radio, to a point where it will take **years** to recover from. Think about that the next time you just want to "see how far I could go without crossing the line".

Our Director's Workbook contains some pretty clear guidelines about ethics that deserve repeating with emphasis.

As Officers and Directors of the American Radio Relay League, you are faced with a unique and challenging responsibility. You have been chosen from the membership to play a key role in representing them in the ARRL. The decisions that you make, or help to make, may have a great influence on the fate of Amateur Radio not only in the US, but throughout the world. As high-ranking representatives of ARRL, you lose whatever anonymity you might previously have enjoyed. **Your every action will be on public display. Every statement that you make, every cause that you support, will be subject to widespread public scrutiny.**

What is ethics? According to Webster, it is the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation. Perhaps Dr. Albert Schweitzer's definition would appropriately amplify Webster: "In a general sense, ethics is the name we give our concern for good behavior. We feel an obligation to consider not only our own personal well-being, but also that of others and of human society as a whole."

In your service as an Officer or Director, your sense of ethics must guide you in a pattern of behavior that will be beyond reproach.

In your appearances at hamfests and conventions, and in your on-the-air activity, you will be measured by everything you do -- not as an individual amateur, but as a representative of the ARRL. You must bend over backwards to ensure that your conduct cannot be faulted.

This equally applies to any communication you may send out "as an individual" and not as a Director or Vice Director. Guess What? That is still taken as "coming from the Director or Vice Director" regardless of how you prefaced it.

If you understand that as an Officer or Director you have been placed upon a pedestal in Amateur Radio, then you will realize that you must be circumspect in your behavior, and beyond reproach in every aspect of your conduct. You will serve the ARRL with honor.

It is my decision, as well as the unanimous decision of the Vice Presidents and the Executive Committee, that our Thursday evening session's primary focus will be an ethics training seminar and your attendance is required.

As always, there are many issues facing amateur radio, our organization and each of us personally. These issues deserve our utmost attention and frankly it is sad that we must focus our attention away from addressing those issues to deal with a matter that we, as individuals our membership has placed considerable trust and confidence in, shouldn't have to.

We have to be, we must be, beyond reproach and we have an obligation to set the standard... **a very high standard** of ethical behavior not only for amateur radio but as corporation officers and stewards as well.

At this meeting some of our important issues are strategic planning, adopting our 2009 Plan amid uncertain economic times and planning events and activities that will continue to stimulate growth and excitement in the Amateur Radio Service.

I will have supplemental oral remarks during our meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Joel Harrison, W5ZN
President

2009 W5ZN Schedule

January 14-18 ARRL Board Meeting

February 21-22 ARRL International DX Contest, CW

April 24-26 International DX Convention, Visalia, CA

May 14-17 Dayton Hamvention, Dayton, OH

July 15-19 ARRL Board Meeting

July 24-25 Central States VHF Society Conference, Chicago, IL

August 20-24 Tokyo Ham Fair, Tokyo Japan

October 10-18 IARU Region III Conference

November 23 – January 13, 2010 **NO PUBLIC EVENTS OR TRAVEL WILL BE SCHEDULED**