

**Report of the Historical Committee  
to the January meeting of the ARRL Board**

The Historical Committee (HC) cares for and administers the ARRL's considerable collection of photographs, preserved documents and donated artifacts. Most of these are located in a caged area on the 2nd floor of the League's offices in Newington, Connecticut, and many of the artifacts are displayed in the foyer and first floor hallway. Care and cataloging of the collection are provided by the part-time services of Perry Williams, W1UED, Curator, and volunteers, principally Charles Griffen, W1GYR.

For the entire year of 2009 the Historical Committee has been very active, spurred on by a desire to complete the YASME grant task of protecting and preserving critical documents and photographs, interest by the board in moving forward, staff commitment to the HC projects, new committee members and the imminent ARRL Centennial in 2014.

The current members of the HC are:

Jay Bellows, K0QB  
Tom Frenaye, K1KI  
Art Goddard, W6XD  
Charles Griffen, W1GYR  
Gary Johnston, KI4LA, Chair  
Dick Norton, N6AA  
Dave Sumner, K1ZZ  
Perry Williams W1UED, Curator

In July we acquired and started using the Past Perfect 4.0 archival/cataloging software package. However, we have shifted our priorities somewhat after careful examination of the photographs, artifacts and documents that comprise the League's collection. As a result of this investigation, a priority has been placed on the most rapidly deteriorating documents, the photographic negatives, and the most valuable of the photographs, which must be scanned and digitally stored while it is possible to do so.

According to Executive Director Dave Sumner, K1ZZ, this year's accomplishments have been considerable, and include the following:

- Continued cataloging of paper file collection. Archivist Perry Williams, W1UED and volunteer Charles Griffen, W1GYR have completed 80% of the cataloging the paper collections that began five years ago.
- In June 2009 the computer work station with a scanner and specialized software were in place to begin the digitization of collections, prints, negatives and artifacts. A manual was prepared with detailed instructions for the process. The system was activated on a dedicated server and functions properly.
- Volunteer Mike Marinaro, WN1M was recruited. A recent retiree, Mike was looking for a project that would support his graduate work at Central Connecticut State University. Since August he has been spending about three mornings a week at Headquarters and has already made an extraordinary contribution to our effort.

- Past Director Art Goddard, W6XD was contacted and agreed to come to ARRL headquarters in June to spend time at ARRL headquarters to share his experience and expertise in historic preservation. Art and Mike spent several days with the new equipment and discussing the preservation process
- Investigation revealed that paper collections, including photographic prints, destined for digitization were in generally good condition and were not in danger of immediate deterioration, and their digitization could be postponed.
- More urgent than the scanning of paper documents and prints was the prevention of further deterioration in more than 2,000 photographic negatives, mainly from the 1940s, '50s and '60s. Serious deterioration of some negatives was beginning to affect other negatives stored with them. All negatives have been placed in individual acid-free archival envelopes and placed in 32 archival boxes. The recommended procedure to prevent further deterioration is to freeze the negatives, which will be done shortly. Some promotional films also will be frozen.
- Four collections were centralized, identified and cataloged:
  - o Originals of early QST and Handbook collections
  - o Bound QST and Handbook collections of W1CUT
  - o More than 2,000 journals of foreign Amateur Radio associations (in incomplete sets)
  - o More than 200 hardcover books concerning the early days of Amateur Radio

These collections have been packaged and stored in a manner most appropriate to their value.

- Storage boxes, file cabinets, and bookcases have been purchased to protect the collections. A freezer is on order to store negatives and prevent further deterioration.

Work continues in the following areas:

- Consolidation of various stores of ARRL QSTs, Handbooks and other publications.
- Improved identification and storage of the original first issues of QSTs, Handbooks and other publications.

**Projects for 2010 are planned as follows, depending on funding:**

- Continue cataloging of the remaining boxes of documents prior to digitization.
- Salvage and preserve approximately 10 file drawers of photographic prints of pictures that appeared in QST in the 1950s to the 1970s. The pictures from each issue are grouped in individual non-archival envelopes. This project entails the removal of metal paper clips and the grouping of prints in individual archival folders with paper separators between each picture.
- Determine the appropriate disposition of antique equipment that is not being used in current exhibits throughout ARRL Headquarters.
- Commence the digitization process.

- Install a dehumidifier in office storage space to improve the environment for the most valuable collections. At present all storage is in Banker's boxes on shelves, in file cabinets or protected in open shelving. The protected items are stored either in the ARRL warehouse, with reasonable climate control or in an office room with better climate control. At present it is not practical to bring the atmosphere in the office room to museum standards of constant temperature and humidity. However, we are exploring this possibility. Each collection has been cataloged in an online database program that identifies its contents and location. The database is currently accessible to any user on the ARRL system.
- Hire part time administrative support.

***The Fund for the Preservation of Artifacts will be fully depleted in the first quarter of 2010 unless additional funding is received. A grant request has been submitted to the YASME Foundation.***

Thanks again to all who have contributed thus far to make this a very productive time for the Historical Committee.

Professor Gary L. Johnston KI4LA, Chair  
ARRL Historical Committee