

THE AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE, INC.
Administrative Headquarters
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT, 06111

April 21, 1967
Directors' Letter No. 1268

ALL DIRECTORS:

Minute 32 of your 1966 meeting directed the General Manager to study and report to the Board on ways and means of affording Citizens Radio Service licensees a greater opportunity to obtain licenses in the Amateur Radio Service.

A study has been made by the staff, with the assistance of public relations counsel Don Waters. The Hq. drew on its background of correspondence and other contacts with both amateur and CB groups, at clubs, etc. Interviews were conducted by Mr. Waters with CBers, officers of CB clubs, staff members of magazines circulating in the CB field, and some amateurs.

The feeling of a basic hostility between the two bodies is, of course, confirmed. It is stronger on the part of hams who resent the poor operating practices and outright rules violations which exist in CB, who look down on the CBer because he has not had to pass any examination, and who in some instances still resent the fact that CBers occupy the 11-meter band formerly available to the amateur service.

On the other hand, CBers resent our implication of second-class citizenship. They have some curiosity toward the amateur service but comparatively little knowledge of it or of ARRL. As a matter of fact, some interviews with CBers were hard to obtain. A first indication of interest was sometimes followed by reticence to discuss mutual matters; one report from Waters said, "They seem to have second thoughts that I'm an FCC spy or something!"

An essential aspect of any program, more definitive than exists at present, to bring CB operators into amateur ranks will therefore require a concurrent effort to "sell" amateurs on the fact that not all CBers are of the stripe which has given the group a bad name, and on the desirability of recruiting the more-responsible people.

A brief summary of past efforts by Hq. in this area may be useful background.

QST has occasionally editorialized on the subject, urging on our members the dropping of prejudice and a realistic look at CBers as potentially good amateurs. Club bulletins have from time to time also covered the matter, especially in urging the setting up of training classes for amateur license.

A promotional circular, copy enclosed, was prepared by Hq. several years ago. With the cooperation of several manufacturers who produce both amateur and CB equipment, nearly a quarter of a million such leaflets have been distributed through enclosure in CB units at the time of packaging. I am obliged to say that the direct response has been disappointingly small, yet we continue distribution in the feeling that the less tangible results -- i.e., delayed reactions -- may well make the operation worth while.

We have prepared for "Popular Electronics" a two-part feature article on how to convert CB gear to ham frequencies, of course with background on amateur licensing, etc. The first installment appeared in the May issue. We have also had other, more general, stories in that and other magazines during the past several years. In addition, we have placed a modest amount of advertising in the above-named magazine plus several others in the "electrical experimenter" handbook field. First results, several years ago, were encouraging; during the past year they again have been disappointing. Such activities, in line with the views expressed at your meeting, will continue.

Learning the code has often been cited as the major roadblock to a potential-ham CBer. Not all leaders in the field share this view, however, feeling that the passing of the technical exam is a similar problem. In view of your recent actions in the licensing area, however, I have assumed there is no disposition to lower standards of entrance into amateur radio and therefore will not comment further in the regulatory area. I would, nevertheless, call your attention to the summary of the industry meeting at Hq. last month, in which there was a strong feeling that making 200 kc. at the top end of ten meters available for Novice voice operation might well be a substantial incentive for CB-to-Amateur conversion, and I recommend consideration of this proposal at your meeting.

Looking toward the future, Waters concludes that CBers are a group of people with a preconditioned interest in amateur radio. Even 10% of their

number having a real desire to become amateurs would make worthwhile any strong effort on the part of the League to assist them. From a long-range point of view, he suggests the League might profitably consider how we could assist CB radio to organize itself for liaison with FCC, technical services, field coordination, etc., as amateur radio is -- either through an adjunct organization or a wholly separate one.

For more-immediate implementation he recommends a mail questionnaire to CB clubs (a list of 400, leading, established clubs nationwide is available) covering their membership, degree of interest in amateur radio, what they would like to have in the way of speakers, demonstrations, etc., from hams. Concurrently, perhaps, there could be a questionnaire to our own affiliated clubs to ascertain the extent of their interest and willingness to work with CB clubs.

I endorse this recommendation. A more definitive program could then be set up, tailored to the results.

With all this, our own experience in promotion among the 11-meter group leads us to caution that if we are expecting such programs to double the number of hams, or greatly enhance our membership, we are doomed to disappointment. But properly applied, an appropriate effort might well produce modest gains in League membership and a reversal of the trend toward a smaller amateur population. The key to success is convincing the present amateur body, particularly clubs, that such a program is in our own interests, for only with their full cooperation can such a project succeed.

The Internal Revenue Service has issued a Notice of Proposed Rule Making concerning "unrelated business income," e.g., advertising, of non-profit tax-exempt corporations such as the League. The firm position of the League is and has been, as most of you know from earlier discussions, that all ARRL activities are related since they are strictly limited to the field of amateur radio. In any event, General Counsel Booth, our local tax counsel, and I will confer shortly to prepare an ARRL filing of comments on the notice. This subject will of course be an appropriate one for your May meeting.