

THE AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE INC



The American Radio Relay League Inc is a noncommercial association of radio amateurs, organized for the promotion of interest in Amateur Radio communication and experimentation, for the establishment of networks to provide communication in the event of disasters or other emergencies, for the advancement of the radio art and of the public welfare, for the representation of the radio amateur in legislative matters, and for the maintenance of fraternalism and a high standard of conduct.

ARRL is an incorporated association without capital stock chartered under the laws of the State of Connecticut, and is an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Its affairs are governed by a Board of Directors, whose voting members are elected every three years by the general membership. The officers are elected or appointed by the directors. The League is noncommercial, and no one who could gain financially from the shaping of its affairs is eligible for membership on its Board.

"Of, by, and for the radio amateur," the ARRL numbers within its ranks the vast majority of active amateurs in the nation and has a proud history of achievement as the standard-bearer in amateur affairs.

A *bona fide* interest in Amateur Radio is the only essential qualification of membership; an Amateur Radio license is not a prerequisite, although full voting membership is granted only to licensed amateurs in the US.

Membership inquiries and general correspondence should be addressed to the administrative headquarters; see page 10 for detailed contact information.

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"IT SEEMS TO US..."

What Belongs in QST?

QST is the oldest Amateur Radio periodical in the world. Few magazines of any kind can claim a longer history.

QST is the official journal of the ARRL. Ideally it would chronicle all of the significant activities in furtherance of the purposes of the ARRL. *QST* is our principal means of communicating with members. With a couple of narrow exceptions our Bylaws require that a copy be sent to every member, every month. *QST* is also the principal tangible benefit of ARRL membership. Every so often a member will say they "subscribe to *QST*" even though membership is more than just a magazine subscription.

There are literally dozens of specialties within Amateur Radio that are pursued with great enthusiasm by their devotees. Virtually all of them are worthy of organizational support in the form of visibility and information dissemination, yet we could not begin to do them all justice in every issue of *QST*. Fortunately, there are other ways to provide needed support.

There is *QEX*, a bimonthly forum for communications experimenters. From its introduction in 1981 as a modest newsletter, *QEX* has grown into a slick 64-page technical publication that incorporates *Communications Quarterly* magazine. For the competitively minded there is *National Contest Journal (NCJ)*, a bimonthly magazine with operating and technical content. The ARRL also proudly publishes the annual proceedings of a wide range of educational, amateur satellite, VHF/UHF, microwave, and digital communications conferences and symposia. These publications reach at most a few thousand members, but the information they contain is important to the advancement of Amateur Radio.

The Internet has come into its own as a means of providing information, rapidly and in depth, either to specific groups of members or to almost the entire membership. According to an independent survey that we commissioned in 2000, 89% of ARRL members had Internet access; no doubt the figure is even higher today. There are 95,000 members who are registered to use the members-only portion of the ARRL Web site, and tens of thousands do so on a regular basis. Every week the ARRL Letter is sent electronically to more than 61,000 members and is passed along to countless others. We can say with pride that the ARRL is already in the forefront among national membership associations in making effective use of the Internet, and the best is yet to come.

Recently an exciting new feature debuted in support of the Field Organization: Section News on the Web. Check out www.arrl.org/sections/ to see how well many Section Managers are already using this medium by including photos, links to other Web sites, and more information than they could possibly fit into their limited *QST* space.

Each month portions of *QST* are made available in advance to members via the Web site. Product Reviews are by far the most popular but the contest results also have an avid fol-

lowing. More than one contester has observed that seeing the results in print a couple of weeks later has become an anticlimax. But we can do more with the Web than just deliver the results earlier; we can also deliver them in more depth and with the line scores in a database so the participants can do their own analyses. For example, we can provide band-by-band contact and multiplier information for each entrant, not just for the high scorers.

Even as Internet capabilities and use have been growing, economic pressures have come to bear on *QST*. Postage increases that far exceed the general rate of inflation and a softening of the advertising market, not just in Amateur Radio but throughout the economy, make it more expensive to deliver each page. At the same time the ARRL is committed to devoting substantial resources to important programs such as spectrum defense, improving the regulatory climate for antennas, and education, while maintaining a wide range of other programs. We incurred a substantial operating deficit during 2001 and expect even larger deficits in 2002 and 2003.

Faced with the obligation to be fiscally responsible, at its January meeting the ARRL Board took two actions affecting *QST*. First, the Board authorized management to set the page count of *QST*. This reversed an instruction given in July 2000 that each issue of *QST* be no less than 176 pages. At least for now, advertising is not sufficient to support 176 pages every month; for the rest of the year you will be seeing 160-page as well as 176-page issues. Second, the Board decided to remove the detailed minutes of the meetings of the Board and Executive Committee from *QST*, saving about 12 pages per year of fine print. The minutes will be available on the Web (they already are) and arrangements will be made for members who want to see them but cannot access the Web. Meeting highlights will be reported in *QST*.

The Board considered, but deferred until July, whether to relocate Section News and contest line scores from *QST* to the Web.

Each month, six pages of *QST* are devoted to Section News. Communication between Section Managers and their volunteers is extremely important, but it is clearly inefficient to print 170,000 copies to reach sections having memberships ranging from a high of 6,664 to a low of 72.

From survey after survey we know that contest rules and results are the least liked content in *QST*. On the other hand, the advancement of operating skills and station performance is an important part of the ARRL's mission. With some of the space freed up by moving line scores to a more appropriate medium we could expand editorial coverage of contest activities in a way that would be of more interest to non-participants.

Between now and July we will be doing our best to use the Web to increase the flow of information in these two important program areas. Take a look and let us know what you think.—David Sumner, K1ZZ