

**Report of the President
ARRL Board of Directors
July 2020**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my pleasure to provide this Report to you as President. It continues to be a great honor to serve as an Officer of the League.

COVID-19 Impact

We were faced with a huge challenge after the January Board meeting as we embarked on finding a new CEO. Then things took another serious turn when COVID-19 hit soon after and swept across America. We've all been impacted in a serious way. The League had to take drastic measures, like many businesses, and is still operating under challenging and less than optimum conditions.

Thanks to Mr. Shelley, his management team, and staff, they have done an exemplary job in maintaining member services and keeping the League going. They took necessary measures to help employees negatively impacted as much as possible. Almost 70 employees worked remotely and are now transitioning back to work as permitted by Connecticut guidelines. They kept the League running and sacrificed a lot to maintain service to our members.

The COVID-19 pandemic devastated the schedule for hamfests, conventions and events with cancellations nationwide, and some have already cancelled into 2021. This will potentially impact our membership and recruitment efforts. More and more clubs and events are going virtual. In fact, the first ARRL sanctioned virtual hamfest was approved a few weeks ago and we are likely to see more events and clubs seek ways to hold their meetings in a virtual environment. It's a new era for sure, and we must adapt with these changing times.

New Member Benefit – Digital Magazines

Speaking of changing times, the League announced a major new benefit for our members. All ARRL members will now receive digital access to four League magazines including QST, On the Air, QEX, and NCJ. This will help address those who seek specialized content and in digital format so they can easily access the various digital magazine editions.

The migration away from print is something we have discussed over the years and will need to continue to evaluate. With the new generation out there now, this suite of digital magazines will appeal to our members more than ever thus providing them greater value to their membership in the League.

Changing Times - The Next Generation

I've written for the past several years about what I call the paradigm shift that I think is underway in Amateur Radio. As I said earlier in this Report, it's changing times and we must adapt. I often talk about the next generation of hams, or what I call the "new generation ham." Most of you have heard at least one of my speeches about the future of ham radio and my concerns about assuring that it will be here when we're all gone. I've given many examples of comments and situations I've encountered with the younger generation and what they thought of Amateur Radio and its future. I've not lessened my concern. Attracting and retaining new Amateurs is at a critical point.

I read an article the other day that had interviews with younger generation hams. It was the article routed on ODV recently. One ham, who was a millennial, made a very interesting point. His message was about change, and he stated that we should get away from the century old focus on person-to-person contacts and favor activities where "human to machine, or machine to machine, communications is the focus." Hum, wonder what us older generation hams think of that notion. Well, it reminded me that I had heard something similar three or four years ago when talking to a group of college hams at a forum. They said the focus to them is not necessarily about the communications itself, that the new generation ham views ham radio as a communications medium. Ham radio has value as a means to accomplish an act. You have to think about that before it sinks in, but it's an interesting distinction in thought about what attracts interest in our hobby today.

I believe our hobby has to change, the League has to change, and our message has to hit the mark, which I know is difficult to do. We are certainly trying to connect with the new generation ham, but we've got to be flexible and be able to make changes quickly. I challenge all of us to push the envelope and to seek new initiatives to meet these challenges.

Membership

I've been posting our membership numbers every few months on ODV along with some comments. In checking the recent numbers through June, every Division has turned positive except one. I think this is wonderful given that new memberships and renewals are now mostly by mail, phone, or online and not at your ARRL booth at hamfests and clubs. Please continue to use your webpage, emails, and Division newsletters to seek new members and renewals. Keep it going!

Volunteer Monitor Program

You will receive more information in the CEO Report about our Volunteer Monitor program, but I wanted to add a few comments about it here. As some of you may recall, enforcement is a matter that historically I've taken special interest in, even going back to the Amateur Auxiliary program days. I'm proud of our Volunteer Monitor program and believe it is a wonderful service the League provides Amateur Radio and it also provides a positive working relationship with the FCC.

We don't hear much about the Volunteer Monitor program, and perhaps that's good in a way. After kicking off the first of this year, Riley Hollingsworth and the team of Volunteer Monitors are fully operational. They are having to do a lot of their own enforcement but through positive outreach efforts and a bit of diplomacy in some cases, they are making a difference. They are not just working on problem situations. They also recognize especially good Amateur operators who exhibit noteworthy operating practices to encourage compliance with FCC rules. I want to highlight their efforts and say they are doing an outstanding job in my opinion.

Staff

I want to thank Mr. Shelley, the management team, and ARRL Staff again for their hard work during the COVID-19 crisis. They have shown superior dedication to our members and the League through these very trying times. I also want to thank all of our volunteers as well. Thank you!

It sure has been an interesting time since our last Board meeting to say the least with the lock downs, working from home, social distancing, and working virtually. I've lost count of the number of ARRL virtual conferences I've had. I hope everyone will be understanding and have some patience with our upcoming virtual Board meeting. Yes, changing times indeed.

I also want to thank the Board for your hard work and devotion to Amateur Radio and the League. I'm proud to serve with you.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Roderick - K5UR
President