

Hudson Division
Annual Report to the Membership 2016

This has been a remarkable year for the Hudson Division and the ARRL.

In 2015 I put over 5,100 miles on the odometer travelling throughout the Division attending club meetings and hamfests. I had the pleasure of talking to hundreds of members over the course of the year, all expressing their pride in being a member of the ARRL.

The year began on January 4th with another very successful Ham Radio University. This NLI Section Convention started on a wet note, but the membership turned out in force, despite the weather, for this very special one day event. Twenty-eight different forums dealing with a myriad of Amateur Radio interests were attended by over 400 local hams. VD Bill Hudzik was the moderator of the QSL Bureau forum which Mike co-moderated the ARRL forum. Mike Corey KI1U, ARRL Emergency Preparedness Manager, was the key-note speaker, and his presentation was live-streamed via the Internet.

Cabinet meetings were held as scheduled in Northern New Jersey and New York City/Long Island. Unfortunately the Eastern New York Section was snowed out twice delaying their meeting until much later in the year. The five Cabinet meetings had a total attendance in excess of 250 members of the Hudson Division leadership. Bill and I have made many trips to visit clubs throughout the Division. We generally have a large audience at these meetings. Perhaps the largest meeting we had was when I had the opportunity to visit the Northern Tier of the ENY Section in November. As there are many clubs in the Albany/Schenectady/Troy/Saratoga area, we opened my visit to the Schenectady ARA to all clubs in the region as a general membership meeting. Not only did we pull in hams from the aforementioned areas, we also had members attend from the most northern counties and south to just above New York City. Over 120 hams attended the meeting, some driving close to two hours to get there

In January I approached the A&F Committee with a proposal to start a new ARRL fund specifically for the purpose of raising money to be used to help offset the expenditures in support of the League's legislative agenda. The Legislative Issues Advocacy Fund started with a \$4,500 donation from the Hudson Division, presented at the annual Board meeting and generously matched with a \$4,500 donation from President Kay Craigie. The Hudson donation was the first of approximately \$18,000 raised by the Division for this fund over the course of 2015.

The ARRL legislative initiative moved into high gear in 2015. The positive results we saw in 2014 helped to jump-start the program in the 114th Congress which began in January 2015. H.R. 1301 was introduced in March on a rather fortuitous day in which Chris Imlay and I were again making the rounds in the House office buildings. The March trip was the first of eight I was to make last year.

Our hard work in Washington has paid off so far. At the close of the year, there were 116 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives. On the Senate side, the companion bill, S. 1685, was introduced in June and successfully marked-up and moved to the Senate floor in August. Over the course of the year, I

made around 170 office visits (House and Senate combined). Like other members of the Board, I also made in District visits as well. These visits will continue in 2016 as it is now crunch time. We have been told that a House mark-up should occur on January 12th by the Communications and Technology Subcommittee of Energy and Commerce, chaired by Rep. Greg Walden W7EQI. We will still need to keep the pressure ongoing after the mark-up.

Along with efforts made by members of the Board, the grass-roots campaign must also continue. Thousands of letters have been written by the rank and file membership at Hamfests and Conventions. These letters are critical to our visits to legislators and their staffs. We need to “rally the troops,” and have them use the new online capabilities that we are able to offer which make sending emails to legislators a snap. It is imperative that we make certain that Directors lead the charge and encourage their members to participate in the process. Constituent input is a requirement that must be met in order for us to succeed.

Vice Director Bill Hudzik W2UDT and I were invited by New England Vice Director Mike Raisbeck K1TWF and Director Tom Frenaye K1KI to attend the New England Convention in Boxboro. We spent an enjoyable weekend helping write nearly a thousand letters to legislators from both the New England and Hudson Divisions. We both appreciate the invitation and thank Tom and Mike for extending it to us.

There have been other benefits to our working the halls of Congress. We have been developing a brand. This is critical to our future success in Washington. We’ve started to receive requests for input and information from legislative offices. To be used as a resource for information is priceless. As we continue our efforts we find that we are no longer the stranger that no one knew anything about. As we see the FCC move away from their responsibilities, particularly in the area of enforcement, clearly we will need to continue a presence on Capitol Hill to continue to advocate for Amateur Radio’s future.

Looking forward, I expect 2016 to be a very eventful year.

For the first time in over 30 years there will be new executive leadership at the helm in Newington. The Board of Directors have a very important decision to make in the hiring of the new CEO who will replace Dave Sumner when he retires on May 1st. This may very well be the most important decision Board members will make during their tenure as a Director. Along with Dave’s pending retirement, long time Chief Operating Officer Harold Kramer WJ1B will be retiring at the end of February. Not to be outdone, the Board will also be electing a new President as Kay Craigie has decided not to run for re-election after serving 6 years in that position. It is also expected that a new First Vice-President will be elected as well.

Within the Division I will continue to press for grass-roots participation in the legislative process. However, this is not the only area in which we will focus our attention.

On January 2nd, an email went out to the Hudson Division (see attached) announcing the start of a pilot program focused on a new initiative in bringing younger people into Amateur Radio. This experiment will be supported by an earmarked donation of funds from a long-standing ARRL member, as well as donated time by college faculty for pedagogical professional development. The goal is to develop

Amateur Radio in today's STEM environment while doing so in a less restrictive club environment, similar to what many of us experienced as youngsters. It is my hope that the program will develop into a blueprint for similar programs throughout the United States.

The League is truly at a crossroad, and the events of this year may well determine the future path of the ARRL and Amateur Radio. I am very excited to be a part of it and look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on the Board of Directors.

73 de Mike N2YBB