



Second Century

Why I'm An ARRL Member

Like many hams, when I first started in ham radio, getting an ARRL membership was something you did naturally — if you were a ham, you became an ARRL member. When I first joined, I was mainly interested in DXCC and receiving QST. Later on, however, I realized that as a member of a national association, I was part of something bigger. That's when “the League” became my League — and by extension, it is our League, that does so much in service to ham radio.

Our League is our liaison to the FCC. When there are threats to our frequency allocations, ARRL navigates the government bureaucracy to ensure that we can retain these valuable bands of radio spectrum. There are some who think fighting for frequency spectrum above the traditional HF, VHF, and UHF bands is a waste of resources. However, radio amateurs have been advancing radio science since the beginning. When radio was in its infancy, the Navy was only interested in very low frequencies and cast off the HF bands to the amateurs, who discovered that communications over long distances was possible with ionospheric propagation. As mesh networking is becoming popular, especially as a tool for public service communications, the microwave frequencies assigned to the Amateur Radio Service have greater value, and our League is fighting to keep them in the Amateur Radio Service. At the time of this writing, our League is preparing a response to an FCC Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to charge a fee for amateur radio license transactions.

ARRL and the FCC have worked together to create the Volunteer Monitor program, a team of vetted and skilled radio amateurs who help support the FCC field offices by listening to hams on the air. This doesn't mean that every offender on the local repeater is going to the stockade, but it provides direction for the volunteers to collect information that will help the FCC prosecute egregious offenders. The FCC and ARRL know that good operators far outnumber the bad actors, so Volunteer Monitors make note of the exemplary operators, who we recognize with a Good Operator Notice.

ARRL is one of many societies of the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU), which represents amateur radio on the global stage. We need amateur radio in other countries not only so we can have people to contact, but because amateur radio is a public resource that must be protected. Without the amateur radio societies of the IARU, ham radio simply would not exist.

Our League works directly with manufacturers that cause problems. Historically, this has included the BPL

industry, manufacturers of wireless modem jacks that operated on 3.52 MHz, and others. Recently, ARRL has worked with two solar-panel manufacturers and manufacturers of wireless power transfer devices to solve noise issues with their product. Currently, the ARRL Lab is actively involved with the IARU and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), helping to develop international law about spectrum use and interference at all levels, and specifically wireless power transfer for electric vehicles. As an individual, I could not possibly be heard by the automobile industry when it comes to RF noise or anything else. Our League has staff who are voting members on IEEE boards that shape industry standards, Electromechanical Compatibility (EMC) standards, and power company policies on how to handle RFI issues.

Amateur radio should be fun, and our League sponsors many on-air contests and operating events. Even if competitive contesting is not your primary activity, these events bring many hams together on the air at one time, to offer you an opportunity to sharpen your skills, test your station, or try out things you have been experimenting with at your station. Proficiency gained while playing a game is the best kind of training. Regardless of what you do for fun, it's all ham radio and our League is here to ensure you can do what it is that you like to do.

You are reading this in *QST*, so it's probably safe to say you are already an ARRL member. Thank you for your membership. Your job now is to find someone who is not a member of our League and explain to them why you are an ARRL member, and how it would benefit them to be a member too. So, why am I a member of ARRL? For the very same reasons every radio amateur should be a member: because the ARRL represents me, and you, and all of amateur radio.

*Norm Fusaro, W3IZ
Director of Operations*