



Second Century

In Celebration of Board Service

Each year during late summer, people who have decided to raise their hand in support of our cause and mission run for office as a Director or Vice Director of ARRL. These are critically important member-volunteer roles, and, much the way they did a century ago, they represent members in specific geographic regions of the country. These elected Board members bring matters of interest, importance, and significance to each Board meeting to ensure their Division has a voice.

Taking on one of these roles can be daunting if done well. Thanks to modern technology, Board members no longer meet in their committees just a few times a year. In fact, our Executive Committee, which used to meet only twice a year between Board meetings, is now able to meet every 8 weeks or so. Once committee and subcommittee meetings are added to the extensive time commitment, which also includes visiting club meetings and hamfests across Divisions that can span more than 1,000 miles, you can see how busy an active Board member is!

After every Board meeting, we publish the minutes for members to read. These minutes are constructed from 2 days of recordings, as well as notes from the meeting, and then are checked by the Board members to make sure there are no errors. The thing that is important to realize is that the Board meeting is not where the business and collaboration of ARRL take place. Yes, it is the place to offer up formal motions with voting, but the actual nuts-and-bolts work of our organization takes place in the work of its committees.

This is why it is so important that, if your Division will be voting this year, you pick the person you feel has the time, energy, and passion to properly represent you! Being a member-volunteer can be wonderfully rewarding. At SEAPAC this year, a lifelong member came by the booth 10 times or so to share his memories of historic events — events in which he was directly involved — with us. As he left on Sunday, he told me this had been one of the best days of his life. It is powerful to see that kind of passion and love for the hobby from someone who has been in it for more than 70 years.

There's a word I left out of the list of qualities you should consider when voting for a Board member, because it needs to be singled out: *resilience*. Despite the many rewarding moments that make being a member-volunteer worth the giving of one's self, there are those that are quite the opposite. These are the ones that are powered by selfish anger and ignorance, typically propagated in one of the online mosh pits of misery or via email — sometimes even YouTube! I find that these aggressive interactions aimed at Board members, and ARRL staff as well, can be fatiguing, deflating, and frustrating. Being able to recognize these

interactions for what they are and rise above them is a skill one develops, and it goes far beyond being “thick skinned”

With all of that said, why would anyone want to raise their hand to volunteer? The answer is: it is remarkably gratifying. The work of ARRL is not just at the Board level; it is at every level. Many of our Board members began their journey as field appointees or as Section Managers. ARRL is a complex organization that oversees the promotion and protection of not just a hobby, but a “hobby made up of hobbies.” Beyond the technical and regulatory aspects that we are expected to know and manage, there is a structure and an organization that keeps amateur radio strong!

Another area with which our Board members get involved — and in which some ultimately go on to serve in an official capacity — is international: specifically, the IARU. Each year, volunteers from around the world attend meetings in each of IARU's three regions to represent the needs and interests of their individual member countries. These meetings can go on for a week or more, and these hundreds of volunteers do the untold heavy lifting for amateur radio, on a global basis, that transcends news bites and accolades.

As you see the ballot for your Division come through, whether it is this year or in a coming year, take a moment. These are people who have been moved to serve — on your behalf. On our behalf. It is a calling. It is work. It is rewarding. And we are, in turn, rewarded by their volunteerism and leadership. We have big plans for ARRL volunteerism coming in 2023, so stay tuned!

My home station is finally QRV and I've been on the air — so be radio active! And be that connector — use your own talents to get more hams QRV too. I'll be looking for you.

David A. Minster, NA2AA
Chief Executive Officer