



Second Century

The IARU and You

April 18 is World Amateur Radio Day. The International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) has selected the observance's theme for 2019: "Celebrating Amateur Radio's Contribution to Society." Some of you may ask, "What is the IARU, and why should I care?"

The International Amateur Radio Union is a federation of national Amateur Radio associations, founded on April 18, 1925 in Paris with representatives from an initial 25 countries. ARRL is the International Secretariat for the IARU, and also represents the United States in the IARU. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), which is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs), has recognized the IARU as representing the worldwide interests of Amateur Radio.



ARRL and IARU have been preparing for this conference, and to protect Amateur Radio spectrum.

Because of this critically important service that IARU provides, it has grown to include 160 member-societies in three regions. These regions are organized to roughly mirror the structure of the ITU and its related regional telecommunications organizations. IARU Region 1 includes Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Northern Asia. Region 2 covers the Americas, and Region 3 comprises Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific island nations, and most of Asia.

The ITU has three main areas of activity called sectors: radiocommunications, standardization, and development. Working through these sectors, ITU allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits, develops the technical standards that ensure that networks and technologies seamlessly interconnect, and "strives to improve access to ICTs to underserved communities worldwide." Directly relevant to Amateur Radio, ITU-R, the ITU's "Radiocommunications Sector," coordinates the international management of the radio-frequency spectrum.

According to the IARU, there are about 3 million hams worldwide. There are about 700,000 hams in the US. ARRL has about 157,000 members.

Tell the World About Amateur Radio

What are you doing to celebrate World Amateur Radio Day? What are you doing to celebrate Amateur Radio's contributions to society? Visit www.iaru.org/world-amateur-radio-day.html to see what your fellow hams around the world are doing this year.

The IARU works through the ITU. According to its constitution, the IARU's "objectives shall be the protection, promotion, and advancement of the Amateur and Amateur-Satellite Services within the framework of regulations established by the International Telecommunication Union, and to provide support to Member-Societies in the pursuit of these objectives at the national level..."

I have given a challenge to ARRL staff. April 18, 2020 will be the 95th anniversary of the founding of the IARU. Let's create a worldwide event — a non-competitive "contest" — to publicize Amateur Radio. I can imagine an operation similar to ARRL Field Day. Clubs or *ad hoc* teams operate from schools, shopping centers, parks, or other highly visible locations. Stations get multipliers for social criteria, like having someone under the age of 20 make a contact. Let's have multipliers for press coverage, both in traditional media and on social media, and the number of placements or "likes" received. And another multiplier for demonstrating all aspects of Amateur Radio — contesting, DXing, emergency communications, homebrew equipment, and more — at your event. The goal of the contest is not to make as many contacts as possible, but to make the biggest impact enticing the next generation of hams into Amateur Radio.

Protecting and Expanding Access to Spectrum

Since its founding in 1925, the IARU has fought to protect and expand Amateur Radio spectrum privileges worldwide, in frequency bands strategically located throughout the radio spectrum. In the 1927 International Radiotelegraph Conference in Washington, DC, Amateur Radio gained the allocations still recognized today — 160, 80, 40, 20, and 10 meters. That conference was chaired by Herbert Hoover, who was US Secretary of Commerce at the time, and had participants from 80 countries.

These details are only my suggestions. As always, I invite your comments to me at wb2itx@arrl.org. Let's take advantage of this event to show the world what Amateur Radio is!

ITU's world radiocommunication conferences (WRC) are held every 3 to 4 years to review, and, if necessary, revise the international treaty governing the use of the radio-frequency spectrum. The next world radiocommunication conference, WRC-19, will happen this fall in Egypt.