



It Seems to Us

David Sumner, K1ZZ — dsumner@arrrl.org
ARRL Chief Executive Officer

Building For Our Second Century

“Next year the ARRL will mark the 100th anniversary of its founding with a year long celebration including a Centennial National Convention in Hartford, where it all began. We are proud of what has been accomplished in the first century of the ARRL’s existence. What’s in store for the second?”

In preparing for the ARRL Centennial in 2014 we have been looking back at the remarkable history of our association. The ARRL had a modest beginning as the brainchild of a committee of the Radio Club of Hartford — itself just a few months old — to fill a perceived need for a network of relay stations throughout the United States and Canada to overcome the severe limitations on the range of amateur stations of that era. Confirmation that the need was real came as hundreds of amateurs across the continent signed up for membership. Thus, the American Radio Relay League was born.

From the very beginning the ARRL was in the forefront, promoting improvements in operating practices and technical advancement. It quickly became apparent that there was another important role for the ARRL to play, as the principal advocate for Amateur Radio to government. The First World War soon forced the fledgling organization into hibernation but it awoke as soon as the Armistice was signed and its members joined together once again for a year long fight to regain their transmitting privileges. Because at the time the ARRL had essentially no resources, initial postwar financing was provided by a bond issue to members. Some never redeemed their bonds, apparently valuing the document as a memento more than the cash.

Despite the hiatus caused by the war, within a decade of its founding the ARRL had led radio amateurs to span the Atlantic and to abandon their inefficient spark transmitters for vacuum tubes. The organization won important friends in Washington to help protect amateurs’ direct access to the radio spectrum. It spearheaded the formation of the International Amateur Radio Union to provide a needed global voice. These and subsequent achievements are chronicled in the online *QST* archive that is available to members at www.arrrl.org/arrrl-periodicals-archive-search. In the months to come we will have much more to say about this proud history.

Our Centennial is a time to reflect on the successes, and even the failures, that have brought us to where we are. Where would Amateur Radio be without the contributions of time, talent and treasure from those who created and then resurrected the ARRL in those early years and whose vision established the democratic governance structure, free from commercial influence, that still guides us today? Would Amateur Radio even exist?

Because it does exist, among the 161,200 members of the ARRL are tens of thousands of us whose lives and careers have been enriched beyond measure. We owe a great debt to those who came before us, who did the difficult and sometimes thankless work of building and sustaining a national association to promote and advance the art, science and enjoyment of Amateur Radio.

We are approaching the threshold of the ARRL’s second century. What can we learn from our association’s proud past, what can we do to build on the strong foundation we have been given, that will ensure an equally proud future for Amateur Radio?

In January 2010 the ARRL Board of Directors took a step toward answering that question when it created a nominating committee with

the task of recruiting members for what ultimately has become the ARRL Second Century Campaign (SCC) Committee. Led by Chairman David Brandenburg, K5RQ, the SCC Committee adopted a vision statement that includes securing significant financial resources to fund the ARRL’s commitment to its future objectives.

During 2011 and 2012 the SCC Committee tested the waters with a pool of potential major donors for a major fundraising campaign to increase the ARRL Endowment. The results of this “quiet phase” of the campaign were encouraging. By the end of 2012 a relatively small group of ARRL members had committed more than \$3.6 million, including \$1.55 million in pledged bequests, to the Second Century Campaign. The amount of cash and stock received in fulfillment of pledges was approaching \$1 million as of year end and had reached that milestone by March 31, 2013. As of that date, total commitments exceeded \$4 million.

Based on those promising initial results, the SCC Committee recommended a fundraising goal of \$10 million for the Second Century Campaign and the goal has been adopted by the ARRL Board with a target date for completion of December 31, 2014 — the final day of our Centennial Year.

ARRL Chief Development Officer Mary Hobart, K1MMH, is devoting her full time to the Second Century Campaign and to the work of the SCC Committee. In addition to Chairman Brandenburg its members are Bob Allphin, K4UEE, Frank Donovan, W3LPL, Glenn Johnson, W0GJ, Ken Byers, K4TEA, L. Dennis Shapiro, W1UF, Mike Valentine, W8MM, and Steven West, W7SMW. Every committee member has made a significant personal financial commitment to the campaign.

As you reflect on the role of Amateur Radio in your own life, please consider what you can do to help ensure the future financial strength of the ARRL. None of us can know the specific challenges our association will face in the future or the opportunities that may arise for the ARRL to make Amateur Radio even more valuable as a community and national resource. But we do know this: Our predecessors made great sacrifices so we could enjoy the benefits of Amateur Radio. We owe the same opportunities to the generations of radio amateurs who will follow us.

For more information please visit www.arrrl.org/arrrl-second-century-campaign. If you would like to discuss how to fulfill your own pledge in the way that best meets the needs of you and your family, please contact Mary Hobart at mhobart@arrrl.org or 860-594-0397, or any member of the SCC Committee.