



It Seems to Us

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Changes

“The ARRL is embarking on a period of dramatic change.”

On January 15, the ARRL Board of Directors elected a new slate of volunteer officers to lead the association for the next 2 years. After 29 years in volunteer leadership roles capped by six successful years as President, including heading the organization during its Centennial in 2014, Kay Craigie, N3KN, decided not to seek another term. The Board chose First Vice President Rick Roderick, K5UR, to take the helm. Rick served in that position throughout Kay’s tenure as President and has been a boardroom presence since becoming Vice Director of the Delta Division in 1992, progressing through the positions of Director and Vice President on his way to the top spot.

Jay Bellows, K0QB, was returned for a fourth term as International Affairs Vice President. Two new officers join Rick and Jay. Stepping up to First Vice President is Dakota Division Director Greg Widin, K0GW, and to Second Vice President is Rocky Mountain Director Brian Milesosky, N5ZGT. In accordance with the ARRL Articles of Association, the Vice Directors of the two divisions automatically succeed to Director, with the Vice Director vacancies filled by appointment for the duration of the current terms.

Change is also coming to the ARRL Headquarters staff.

Chief Operating Officer Harold Kramer, WJ1B, retires at the end of February. Harold joined the staff 11 years ago, bringing with him a lifelong interest in and passion for Amateur Radio along with knowledge and experience acquired in a career with for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. Several revenue-generating innovations and a focus on staff development and strategic planning have made lasting contributions to the health of the ARRL.

And on April 18 I will be retiring as Chief Executive Officer and Secretary.

It was 34 years ago, in March 1982, that the ARRL Board of Directors elected me General Manager and Secretary and, at the age of 32, put me in charge of ARRL Headquarters, including QST. Today I am in the same office and literally at the same desk that I inherited from Dick Baldwin, W1RU (SK).

The desk is just about the only thing that hasn’t changed.

In 1982 I was able to say I had participated in all aspects of Amateur Radio operation. Since that time the scope of Amateur Radio has expanded so much that anyone’s similar claim would be dubious at best. New avenues for exploration are being opened faster than any of us can keep up. And that’s good. It means that we will never run out of opportunities to try something new, to learn and to share what we have learned with others. If you’re bored with Amateur Radio you’re not paying attention!

Last April I advised the Board of Directors of my intention to retire. A committee of five Directors launched a search for my successor. The search process culminated in the selection of a lifelong radio amateur and longtime ARRL member, Tom Gallagher, NY2RF. An offer of employment was extended to Tom during the Board Meeting on January 15 – 16 and was accepted shortly thereafter. He will join the Headquarters staff on February 29 as CEO-Elect and after a period

of transition will take over from me on April 18. You can read more about Tom in “Happenings” this month.

The faces around the Board table and at Headquarters are not the only things that may be changing. At its January meeting the Board launched an initiative that could lead to the first major adjustment to the League’s governance structure in decades.

The policymaking authority in our association rests with the 15 volunteer Directors who are elected to 3-year terms by ARRL Full members in the respective geographically defined Divisions. Apart from separating Canada to form its own national association in 1988, the last major adjustment in Division boundaries occurred in 1957 when New Mexico was transferred from the West Gulf to the Rocky Mountain Division; prior to that it was the splitting of the Central Division in two to create the Great Lakes Division, in 1946.

Equalizing the number of members in each Division was not the overriding objective, either when Divisions were first created or at any time since. The difficulty and cost of travel, especially in the less densely populated parts of the country, was another important consideration. Still, in an ideal representative democracy every member ought to have an equal opportunity to influence the decisionmaking process. Currently the number of ARRL Full members of the largest division is 4.65 times that of the smallest. This ratio has not changed radically over time, although the shift in population to the south and west has caused it to increase somewhat.

While the Board declined to adopt a redistricting plan that was offered as an immediate solution, it did create a Reapportionment Committee and directed the committee to explore at minimum the following means of reapportionment, along with any others they can think of: realigning division boundaries, decreasing or increasing the number of divisions, and weighting a Director’s vote based on the number of members represented. The committee has until the January 2017 meeting of the Board to make its report. Any change will require amendment of the Bylaws, which takes at least 10 Directors voting in favor.

While representational equality is not the only element of good governance, the ARRL Divisions were defined when most travel was done by rail. The interstate highway system did not exist. All passenger aircraft had propellers, air travel was expensive and service was sparse. While many ARRL members identify closely with their present Division, a review is clearly overdue.

Healthy organizations have the ability to evolve — to change in order to adapt to a changing environment.

The ARRL is such an organization.