



Second Century

Lifelong Loyalty

As a teenager, getting licensed was a very exciting time, as it opened a world of new opportunities! Of course, I am speaking of my driver’s license. New Jersey in the late 1970s posed a dilemma for many drivers, irrespective of age. The state changed its insurance laws, and some insurers departed the state, stranding thousands of customers. This made it nearly impossible for a 17-year-old male to get insurance. One insurance company came through for me, and now, 43 years later, I have never even thought of going to another company. There is no program. There is no title. There are no extra benefits. There is just the fact that they had my back when I needed them, and to this day they always have. To them, I have been a lifelong loyal customer.

Back in 1968, ARRL created the Life Member program. This is a program that means different things to different people. On one hand, it is viewed as demonstrating a lifelong commitment to ARRL by paying for 25 years of membership! On the other hand, there are Life Members who believe they made an astute investment in ARRL years ago when the cost was considerably lower than today, representing an enormous membership discount going forward. Regardless, we view Life Members for what they are: members who stepped forward and showed their “forever” support of ARRL and our mission.

As we have gone back to in-person events, I have had the opportunity to speak in front of, as well as one-on-one with, literally hundreds of members. In those discussions, I’m hearing that some Life Members feel like they could be showing more support to ARRL. I asked if they knew about our Diamond Club program, and to my surprise many did not. In fact, I had a recent discussion with a longtime donor who decided along with his wife that they would be increasing their giving to ARRL, and they have chosen Diamond Club as the way to do it. And thus, we have a distinction between a Life Member and a Lifelong Member. They each show their support in different ways, both valuable.

ARRL has many, and probably too many, ways to give in support of ARRL initiatives. Naturally, one of the most popular is spectrum defense, an area in which we out-spend gifting every year. We recently received a very generous gift from a donor to expand the collegiate program into club giving as well, which will support those programs for many years. Another donor focused a large estate gift on ARRL’s Education and Learning Program. This, too, will likely continue to support those programs for years.

The benefit to ARRL of the Diamond Club program is that it provides the Board the ability to fund projects and initiatives as are required to support our mission. It also helps to create a nest egg that can generate annual earnings ARRL can use to fund its day-to-day operations, which are not fully funded through membership dues. Diamond Club has become the heavy hitter in our bullpen of development tools to fund ARRL. Its benefits are also popular with members and Life Members alike. Members cover their membership dues within the donation, and Life Members enjoy the annual promotions and the knowledge that they are continuing to support their loyalty to ARRL.

I am proud to be a Diamond Club member. Last year, I took the opportunity to purchase bricks in front of ARRL Headquarters for my father, my brother, and myself as a legacy indication of our love for amateur radio and ARRL. Even though we had not been together in the same place for some time, we came together and had our picture taken with our bricks! I hope that in the coming years, my granddaughters’ grandchildren will come to Newington, looking for evidence of the lifelong loyalty their great-great-grandfather had for our community and organization.

Take the opportunity to reflect on Life Membership, Lifelong Loyalty, and your and your family’s intentions of support for ARRL, now and in the future. Be that connector, and be radio active!

David A. Minster, NA2AA
Chief Executive Officer