



Second Century

Making Elections Count

Election season for five ARRL Divisions (Pacific, Rocky Mountain, Southeastern, Southwestern, and West Gulf) is well under way. This is an important time for ARRL members in those Divisions to vote for whom they think should serve on the ARRL Board of Directors to help lead and steer the organization for the next 3 years.

As a membership association, there is — regrettably — a mishmash of notions about what ARRL once was, what ARRL is, what ARRL should be, and what the role of a Director or a Vice Director is. It was even a popular notion among some that ARRL is a representative democracy! In order to vote wisely, there are fundamentals you need to understand that should help bring some clarity to the choices set before you.

First and foremost, ARRL is a corporation. The Board is a group of 15 Directors who act together as a single body to make decisions and take actions. You should be considering that. Picking someone who has been around a while or who is a “real nice guy” are probably not the best parameters to use when voting for a Board member. Being a Director is far more work than showing up twice a year to vote. We know, because we have seen them, that Directors who function this way perform poorly on the Board. They have difficulty collaborating, generate few — if any — motions, and accomplish little with the opportunity they have.

Second, credentials matter. You may not realize that the ARRL Board and the ARRL Foundation Board each elect a Treasurer. Both organizations are extremely fortunate to have highly educated and deeply experienced leaders from the finance world who fill these positions. These are not ceremonial positions, but active positions that require extensive real-world knowledge. The ARRL Treasurer leads a group called the Investment Management Committee that likewise is comprised of remarkably experienced leaders from the finance community that aid in how ARRL manages its funds. When looking at candidates, consider what business chops they bring to the table.

Third, and perhaps most important for the future, is to consider how strong each candidate looks as a potential ambassador for ARRL and for amateur radio. Who among the candidates looks like an inspirational speaker and leader who can bring excitement to a club meeting or a convention? Which one can stand in front of a group of students and get them excited about the possibilities for a future vocation and avocation influenced by radio communications technologies? Does

one of the candidates make you feel good about being a member and a ham?

I made a very big mistake as a lifelong ARRL member. I almost never voted. I just assumed that ARRL would figure it out and that they would always have my back. I was right, but I was wrong. ARRL *has* always had my back. But I didn't do *my* part as a member by paying attention to the one thing ARRL really needed my feedback, my input, on: leadership.

Much work lies ahead for ARRL to advance our bold mission: to promote and protect the art, science, and enjoyment of amateur radio, and to develop the next generation of radio amateurs. This effort requires leaders who are dedicated to the cause, willing to roll up their sleeves, and able to set aside any notion of personal gain for the good of the organization. And if there was a job description, it might include “works well with others.”

So, in this upcoming election, be radio active! Please take the time to *be* a member. Carefully consider who *you* want to lead. Talk with the candidates. Take the time to read their statements. Go see them in person. Choose well. Be a connector! Make sure your friends and club members are paying attention too. See you in the upcoming contests!

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