



Second Century

Leave the Gun. Take the Cannoli.

From its earliest days as an organization, ARRL has been at the forefront of protecting amateur radio, especially regarding spectrum. The job of spectrum defense used to be easier. Knowledgeable staff at the FCC, some of whom were licensed hams themselves, understood and appreciated the national interests served by our voluntary, noncommercial service: getting youth interested in science, electronics, and space; providing trained communicators and equipment when natural disasters strike and public events are held; pushing and extending the frontiers of communications technology, and enhancing international goodwill through direct person-to-person communication.

In the past, there were fewer demands on staff time and spectrum resources. Today, with wireless devices of every kind being used by everyone, everywhere, and even by machines communicating with other machines, the amateur bands are constantly under attack.

“Leave the gun. Take the cannoli.” The simplicity of this line from *The Godfather* couldn’t be further from our reality: when it comes to spectrum defense, it is a complicated environment, with many partners and threats. It is essential to always be on guard and defend against efforts to wrest away the spectrum to which amateurs have already been granted access and are putting to good use.

This is important, because without spectrum there is no amateur radio. It is remarkably easy to lose, and with today’s demands, almost impossible to gain. We have recently been battling with varied levels of success in the 3 GHz and 5 GHz ranges. We also regularly get involved when there are conflicts, and amateur radio needs representation to resolve them. Even though I wouldn’t categorize this strictly as spectrum defense, when there are regulatory challenges to amateur radio, such as the US Forest Service’s proposed inspection fees for land users — which are a threat to repeater groups — ARRL gets involved.

Next year is an especially big year for amateur radio. It marks the next World Radiocommunication Conference, or WRC-23. The meetings will be held at the World Trade Centre in Dubai at the end of 2023. These meetings will take decisions that will impact amateur radio. Some of the issues that may impact amateur radio include: “to consider identification” of 3300 – 3400 MHz and 10 – 10.5 GHz for International Mobile Telecommunications, or IMT (agenda item 1.2); “to conduct studies on spectrum needs” for the aeronautical mobile service for non-safety applications (agenda item 1.10); “to conduct, and complete in time for WRC-23, studies” for Earth

Exploration-Satellite Service (EESS) spaceborne radar sounders “around 45 MHz” (agenda item 1.12); “to consider studies relating to spectrum needs” and potential new allocations” to the mobile-satellite service, or MSS (agenda item 1.18); and additional measures to protect the radionavigation-satellite service (space-to-Earth) in the 1240 – 1300 MHz band (agenda item 9.1).

Representation at these events, and all the committee meetings leading up to them, are critical for amateur radio to have a voice on the world stage. Commercial interests and foreign national interests will be coming together, based on the agenda for WRC-23. Planning and agreement on the agenda for WRC-27 will also be taking place. ARRL will be represented by our Washington expert, ARRL Technical Relations Specialist Jon Siverling, WB3ERA. We will also be represented by a delegation from the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU), for whom ARRL is Secretariat, and to whom ARRL provides significant financial support. Very few members, including me before becoming CEO, really have any idea of how important IARU is in the grand scheme of protecting our spectrum.

As we roll into the end of the year, our push for additional financial support to protect and defend our spectrum will be in full swing. This is very simple: we need your help. Please consider, knowing the expense and importance of our involvement in WRC-23, giving to the ARRL Spectrum Defense Fund (<https://home.arrl.org/action/Donate/Spectrum-Defense-Fund>). Use it or lose it. Be radio active! Be the connector getting more people active. See you on the air!

David A. Minster, NA2AA
Chief Executive Officer