

All's Well In Amateur Radio?

We are not losing our bands, we are gaining bands, our numbers are increasing at the rate of CB at 100,000 per year, youth is flocking to our hobby, we have only one representative to the FCC, our ranks are not divided into incentive vs non-incentive, CW vs Phone, etc., our wonderfully efficient ARRL is not losing money but is furnishing \$2,000,000 a year as a nonprofit organization to run its powerful lobby from its Washington headquarters, our efficient management team as moved ARRL headquarters from that quaint little town, Newington, Conn., where the inaction is, to Washington where the action is. QST is now a first-rate reporting medium where you can read both sides of the story, almost all amateurs now belong to the ARRL, there is a very powerful world amateur organization, our public image is phenomal, and everyone knows about and loves amateur radio and last, and not the least, we have a 10-year written plan to plot a course for amateur radio that is supported by and contributed to by the powerful EIA lobby in Washington. Now let's put down our opium pipe and look at the facts.

Prophet of doom? Or realist? Take a look at the graph in Fig. 1 whose figures are taken from the FCC Annual Reports of the years 1958 through 1969. These figures are official fact and cannot be refuted. This slow-down in amateur radio growth and low percentage of amateurs in the ARRL is one of the key problem areas. Unless this trend is stopped, our hobby will slowly die.

This graphic picture is better than 10,000 words. It presents the basic problem in a nutshell. However if you look

beyond these figures, and interpret what they are saying, the facts are pretty gruesome. CB, while it has only 860,024 stations, the total including mobiles licensed is a staggering 3,372,525. It is relatively simple to see that this is where the manufacturers are looking for a market and that's why the manufacturers through the EIA are pushing the FCC for more frequencies for CB.

It is interesting to note the membership in the ARRL pretty well follows that of the slow growth or even loss in numbers of amateur radio. The drop in membership, 35% in 1962 to 28% in 1969, closely follows controversial decisions made by the ARRL Directors and the lack of selling the decision by headquarters via QST. We make no real effort to sell all the amateurs on the ARRL. The only single written effort is that when a person receives a license from the FCC he gets a letter from the ARRL requesting he join. The only other effort is the corny outdated ARRL booth at various functions that is always

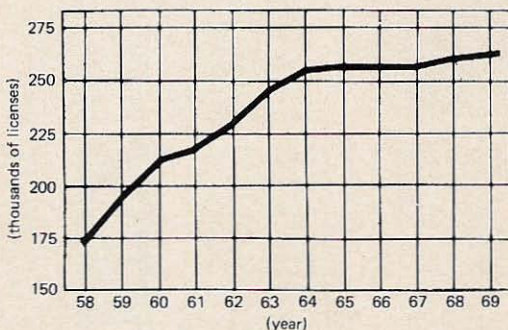


Fig. 1. Graph of total licenses issued from 1958 to 1969.

undermanned. Amateurs just won't flip over and play dead and accept the great ARRL. They must be sold and that requires public relations, good advertising outside of QST, and more important, a truly representative ARRL that expresses the desires of *all* amateurs.

Many questions arise that should be answered. Why has amateur radio growth stopped? Why is the ARRL membership so low? What has happened to the once very successful and aggressive ARRL? Why has it lost respect at the FCC? Why is it losing money? Why are our bands being nibbled away? Why is youth not interested in amateur radio? What has happened to a once successful operation that has now become stodgy and ineffective? Why isn't QST a real reporting medium that prints both sides of the story? How good is its leadership? What can be done to revitalize the ARRL and amateur radio? Why don't we have a long-range plan?

Every successful business has a long- and short-range plan. How can you project finances without one? How can you anticipate change and hazards without one? Without a plan you are like a ship at sea with no destination, buffeted around by the wind and waves, never getting to shore unless it's by accident. Why do we resist change?

Change is the Name of the Game

Last year the "EIA" (Electronic Industries Association) went through a rather drastic organizational change. The NAB (National Association of Broadcasters), the largest and most powerful lobby in Washington, had an organizational renovation to make it more effective. Hundreds of corporations continued the realignment of their organizations to reflect changing conditions and to show a better return on their investment. Why do we amateurs resist change? Those who resist change generally die. Take a look at the old problems: the same old contests, the same old arguments, the same old names, the same old "lots of talk and no action" and so on, ad infinitum. We have been doing the same old things in the same old way since the birth of amateur radio. While we are compla-

cently sitting, a population explosion, communication revolution and drastic world changes are swarming around us. We are like Rip Van Winkle — we are waking up in an entirely different, highly-competitive world. Only we are not like Rip; we haven't awakened as yet.

There are several things that can happen to amateur radio. Things can go on as they are with our ranks divided, on entities using and taking our bands, our real growth stopped, youth not very interested, our former mainstay, the ARRL, losing its effectiveness, losing the respect of the FCC, losing money. The League, which represents less than thirty-five percent (35%) of the amateurs, has become complacent and stodgy and is in general need of revitalization. Amateur radio will certainly slowly die as we are! Or we can make a turn-around and again be the highly respected healthy entity we once were. It's your responsibility — isn't it time for action?

... Wells Chapin ■

73 MAGAZINE DXPEDITION

T1	Costa Rica	CO, CM	Cuba
VP1	British Honduras	FG7	Guadaloupe
VP2A	Antigua	FM7	Martinique
VP2B	Barbuda	HI	Dominican Republic
VP2D	Dominica	HH	Haiti
VP2G	Grenada	HK	Colombia
VP2K	Anguilla, St. Kitts	HK0	Baja Nuevo
VP2L	St. Lucia	HP	Panama
VP2M	Montserrat	HR	Honduras
VP2S	St. Vincent	K/W	USA
VP2V	British Virgin Is.	KC4	Navassa
VP5	Turks & Caicos	KG4	Guantanamo Bay
VP7	Bahama	KP4	Puerto Rico
XE	Mexico	KS4	Swan Is.
YN	Nicaragua	KS4B, HK0	Serrana Bank, Roncador Cay
YV	Venezuela	KV4	Virgin Islands
YV0	Aves Island	KZ5	Panama Canal Zone
ZF1	Cayman Islands	PJ-A	Aruba
6Y5	Jamaica	PJ-B	Bonaire
8P	Barbados	PJ-C	Curacao
9Y4	Trinidad and Tobago	PJ2M, FS7	Saint Martin
		PJ-S	Saba, Eustacius

What bands would you like to see used?

What modes?

Please number the countries you need the most, 1—10, in the order of greatest need. Check all the remaining countries which you need.

Any suggestions?

Please send to:

DX Editor
73 Magazine
Peterborough NH 03458