

[Publisher's Note: The following is a letter from an area ham.]

ARRL Membership - A personal dilemma whether to renew or move on ...

The ARRL has been a part of my ham life for over 5 decades. In August my ARRL membership comes up for renewal. Throughout the years I could always count on the ARRL to be there for me and other hams. I willingly paid my membership dues year after year in support of the ARRL's dedicated mission to protect and keep amateur radio relevant.

When Dave Summer, the ARRL's longtime CEO retired, the process to hire a new CEO left me wondering if leadership really knew what the membership and organization needed. The chaos surrounding the hire of a new CEO was very disconcerting. Each person hired seemed to have a different plan, only to find that none of these individuals understood our membership organization and importantly their leadership role. This includes the most recently hired CEO.

Last year's hacking of the ARRL website and LoTW was an embarrassment. For an organization steeped in communications and technology, the ARRL's IT infrastructure was grossly outdated and not given the attention that it needed by either previous or current leadership.

The ARRL leadership team, including senior management and staff, the president and many on the board of directors, all need to take a hard look at who they are suppose to benefit and answer the following question, "Are we meeting our membership's expectations?" If leadership really cares about the members, they should make that their number one mission.

The ARRL president, and many division directors and section managers, need more visibility and communication to the membership they serve. I cannot remember the last time our elected South Florida Division Director or Section Manager attended a club meeting or communicated to us via email, or even updated their webpage. ARRL members and affiliated clubs have an expectation that their voices will be heard. ARRL leadership needs to take a hard look at how their actions impact the members and act accordingly.

Apparently, with less than 50% of U.S. hams as ARRL members, something is not working. The ARRL needs to look inward in a hurry. Of course, if the true goal is to move the ARRL from a membership organization to that of a publisher and foundation, then they are succeeding.

I guess I have made my decision whether to continue to be an ARRL member.