

Second Century



Finding the “Why” that Leads You to Volunteer

The most precious gift, the most valuable asset you have, is time. Giving of your time demonstrates commitment — commitment to a friendship, to a passion, to a cause. I give generously of my time to my team, the ARRL Board, the ARRL Foundation, and our members. At the same time, I have become very frugal about wasting my time suffering through the foolish gripes and snipes posted online about ARRL. There is so much to do, and there are so many wonderful possibilities in giving one’s time to our cause — our noble cause — of promoting and protecting amateur radio.

Those two words, *promote* and *protect*, neatly and succinctly define ARRL’s mission. As we embark on a new 5-year strategy for ARRL, what is your vision of what ARRL and amateur radio will look like in 5 – 10 years? How much farther will we reach with digital modes? How much higher will we experiment into the GHz range? How will ARRL deliver its products and services, having moved well into its digital transformation? Many of the underlying technologies and capabilities ARRL will be relying on will come from you: the member-volunteer. We need to know your thoughts.

Since graduating from Cornell, my daughter has devoted her life to one cause: curing breast cancer in our lifetime. That is a powerful vision that took just six words to articulate. Her organization, the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, raises in excess of \$40 million per year with a small staff to fulfill their mission: funding world-class researchers and encouraging collaboration in finding treatments and cures. Again, that mission is very simply stated. The devil is in the details; for the many volunteers and donors, their passion — their *why* — comes from having been touched by breast cancer in one way or another, and their commitment to the mission — to the cause — has radically improved the survivability of breast cancer today.

I have stated in this space that amateur radio is in a critical place with leadership and volunteerism. We have begun a succession of watching hamfests die, clubs wither away, Field Organization positions become difficult to fill. Those that remain struggle to rebuild something meaningful for their amateur radio community. The need to reverse this pattern is no longer something of a soft ask. It is time to look around you and decide how *you* can contribute to our avocation and to our cause. How important has amateur

radio been to your life? How many of the people you count as friends today came directly or indirectly from our global community? How important is it to you to build a legacy for amateur radio that will lead younger generations, as they contemplate their future and the use of their time, to join amateur radio to drive experimentation and exploration that may influence the next generations of commercial products and services?

These are questions for you to ponder, and to answer for yourself. I cannot answer them for you. Here’s what I know about ARRL and our mission: volunteers are critical, financial support is critical, being positive and making the community welcoming to, and embracing of, everyone is critical, and the actions that detract from those things become friction, poison, and even cancer to amateur radio.

Where we go this year, the Year of the Volunteers, is completely up to you. I will do my part. We will do our jobs. But now is the time to do those things we softly encourage all the time: be radio active in whatever form that can mean to you; be that connector with the people who you know inside and outside of amateur radio; reach one rung higher in the giving of personal time and financial support in whatever ways you can — remember, “If not me, then who?” It is your actions that will define how *you* will answer, “Why?” And when you know why, tell me. Even better — show me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David A. Minster'. To the right of the signature, the call letters 'NA2AA' are written in a smaller, similar script.

David A. Minster, NA2AA
Chief Executive Officer