



Second Century

No One Left Behind

The part of amateur radio that has always been the most important to me has been our community. Over the years, as I have traveled domestically and internationally, I have had the opportunity to meet many hams and count them as my friends. The amateur radio community is a diverse one. People from all walks of life, all backgrounds, all demographics — there doesn't seem to be a single area the hobby doesn't touch. So why do new hams feel left out, lost, and even not welcomed into our community?

When I think about my ham friends, I look to someone like Bennett Norell, KO2OK, and see a *connector*. He's someone who shows a real passion not just for being in the community, but for bringing people together to strengthen and expand our community. He has long held leadership positions in local amateur radio clubs, has been a "first responder" to radio amateurs who need help solving a problem with their station, and even takes the lead in organizing field operations like VHF contests and ARRL Field Day. Maybe you know Bennett, or a ham like him, who, time and time again makes sure that everyone, regardless of age or interest, gets the opportunity to be involved and get on the air.

Now ask yourself: After your club held its last VE exam session, what happened to those new Techs? If they came to the club meeting later that day or at the next session, were they asked to stand and introduce themselves? Was there a round of applause for joining our ranks? Did you exchange phone numbers and offer to mentor them on what to do with their new license? Maybe the unwelcome feeling didn't come from a club experience at all. It could have come when that new Tech, with a budget handheld, broke into a conversation on the local repeater to try to introduce a shiny new call sign. Was that new ham met with a message of welcome? Or rather, with sharp criticism for using an inferior piece of equipment to interrupt two longtime repeater buddies?

The feeling of being included — *inclusion* — is a powerful tool for our community. Our strength is in our numbers, our shared passion for the hobby, our breadth of deeply experienced people, and our ability to communicate as friends and mentors! I can't be there at your next meeting, on your next repeater QSO, or at your next hamfest. It's just not possible. So, I need to count on *you* to be a connector, like Bennett. Go out of your way. Meet these new hams. Or even the longtime hams that have drifted away for whatever reason. We are members of a national association, coming together to share the common interest and passion of our hobby. Be that connector who strengthens our bonds!

What I can do, and what I am personally committed to, is work to be more inclusive of hams who are visually im-

paired and blind. I recently saw some posts from Paul Ladd, KN4CHK, a visually impaired radio amateur only recently licensed. Paul is navigating through amateur radio using ARRL discussion groups on everything from seeking advice about his BTECH handheld, to learning CW, to making contacts on his Kenwood TS-120S and G5RV. What tenacity! It strengthens our resolve to be more inclusive of this community, knowing that ARRL will be paving the way for Paul, and many other amateurs and wannabe amateurs with disabilities, to enjoy traveling the world and meeting new people through the comfort and convenience of their home stations, or leveraging remote stations! We will be making ARRL's newsletters and magazines more readily available to this community by supporting formats for text-to-speech and refreshable Braille displays. We will also be exploring new interfaces for SDR receivers and transceivers so anyone, regardless of ability, can tune in the world.

Additionally, we at ARRL are working on programming and tools to make our Section Managers, Field Organization, and Affiliated Clubs more successful in building the community. We'll provide structure and standards for locally produced newsletters and websites, the content needed to make them relevant, and other forms of instructional and informational content to drive meetings. We're also working to support youth and STEM initiatives to expand broad interest in radio technology and radio communications, and we'll help make that happen by enhancing our Learning Center with someone who has extensive video content production and youth educational programming experience. Along with all of these efforts, we will strive to expand an active and engaged ARRL membership as well.

As always, I encourage you to be radio active. Be a connector! Have a friend who isn't a member? Get them to join ARRL! And reach out — we'd love to hear from you at ceo@arrl.org.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David A. Minster', with 'NA2AA' written in smaller letters to the right.

David A. Minster, NA2AA
Chief Executive Officer