



## Second Century

# Building Club Membership

*As we continue to focus on the importance and vitality of radio clubs during our Year of the Club, one important aspect to the membership of your club is to provide an open door and a nurturing environment to amateur radio newcomers. It seems every time I speak or write on this topic, I hear from members who describe club environments that are anything but welcoming. This year is a great time for a new start, and the use of new approaches to growing your — and our — ranks.*

One very important program that ARRL played a small role in, and has continued to support, is MARCONI ([www.arrl.org/marconi-program](http://www.arrl.org/marconi-program)). Why do we continue to put a spotlight on this program from the Meriden (Connecticut) Amateur Radio Club? You may think there's nothing innovative about the ideas, and that it states the obvious in many ways. We continue to direct club leaders and their members to look at the list of activities because it can give a club structure. It can inspire one or more members to take on one of the areas and run with it.

One of the clubs I visited last year was the South-eastern Connecticut Amateur Radio Society (SECARS). I was impressed by their organization and energy. I was also taken by how many new hams and new club members were at that meeting — not unusual for them. One of the many takeaways was the offer from their POTA organizer to schedule, right there on the spot, a POTA outing later in the week if there was any interest. There was! He was able to quickly get consensus as to when those interested were available and — *voilà!* — the outing was scheduled. By using the MARCONI list of club activities as a way to get organized, it is easy to get one or more organizers in the club to provide activities for new or interested nearby hams to join in.

It has nearly become cliché to mention the good work that the Nashua (New Hampshire) Area Radio Society does, and how successful they have been at growing and maintaining a strong club. One of the activities that the MARCONI program covers is satellite contacts. Fred, AB1OC, and Anita, AB1QB, Kemmerer have built increasingly sophisticated satellite ground stations with which to conduct contacts, including their very first satellite contacts using a handheld radio and simple Yagi antenna. This grew into the work that Fred has done acting as an ARISS coordinator and ground

station operator. It doesn't take a huge investment to get your club and club members onto the amateur satellites. ARRL uses a simple handheld dual-band antenna with the ARRL Teachers Institute on Wireless Technology classes. We now make that antenna available to everyone ([www.arrl.org/arrl-dual-band-2-m-70-cm-handheld-yagi-antenna](http://www.arrl.org/arrl-dual-band-2-m-70-cm-handheld-yagi-antenna)), whether they're students in a classroom or club members in a field. There is great excitement among newcomers as well as local hams looking for a new activity for their amateur radio enjoyment.

Finally, not everyone is into chasing awards or contesting like I am. But for someone new to the hobby, or for your club looking for inspiration to get on the air, chasing new states, countries, or even other clubs can be exciting, and both the ARRL awards programs and contests provide that inspiration — especially this year with the America250 WAS awards we have created in support of the US semiquincentennial celebration. There are great opportunities to get on the air, chase, and work those needed states, W1AW portable stations, and ARRL Affiliated Club stations.

While the spotlight is on the action and on your clubs, be radio active! Choose one of the MARCONI activities and make it a success for growing your club as well as amateur radio. Be a connector by reaching out to local hams you know who may be sitting on the sidelines, and get them back in the game! Looking forward to seeing many of you at Dayton Hamvention! Come by the ARRL booth and say hello!

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