



## Second Century

# The Excitement is Back!

*In February, the 2022 ARRL National Convention and Orlando HamCation® brought together thousands of hams for 4 days of excitement and community. It was a joy to be back together after nearly 2 years, and poignant that the event came 100 years after ARRL's first National Convention, held in 1921 in North Chicago. I thought I'd use this month's column to bring you there.*

We kicked off our National Convention by bringing together hundreds of members to participate in four full-day training tracks that included technology, emergency communications, contesting, and a special track of assorted hands-on topics inspired by our 2022 ARRL Handbook. Attendees came from 44 states, as well as international locations. As you might have suspected, the EmComm track was the most heavily attended. We were fortunate to have representation from FEMA and CISA there, and it was great to hear reinforcement that the debate about ARES® versus AUXCOMM holds no merit, but I'll save that for another column!

I enjoyed delivering the convention keynote. It was principally about the changes that have been going on at ARRL Headquarters over the past year or more — a glimpse into what I referred to as the “sausage making,” where those seeking transparency have been disappointed that there are no conspiracies to be found, just evidence of hard work and progress. I spoke of the doomsayer prognostications that were circulating when I came to ARRL, and showed how wrong those predictions were.

One of those predictions was that engaging with the ham radio YouTube community would prove to be a huge mistake. How wrong they were! Just 1 year later, our digital Content Creators from the YouTube community coordinated and ran our “Hands-on Handbook” training track! These are the instructors, authors, and mentors of our time, who motivate us to try new things and to hone our skills. If you want to meet your favorite YouTube personality, they attend these larger events to talk with you, listen to your thoughts, and share ideas about creating content in the future.

Our large exhibit area at HamCation was truly destination. Attendees were greeted by a big ARRL team that included Board members, Section Managers, Field Organization volunteers, and staff. President Rick Roderick, K5UR, and I were tethered to our meet-and-greet area, and the pileup was two to three deep through most of the weekend. It was wonderful to meet so many of you!

ARRL also sponsored three forums at HamCation, including a Collegiate Amateur Radio Initiative forum filled with student representatives from college and university radio clubs. Our EmComm forum included a dynamic panel of Florida-area Emergency Coordinators and a

Public Information Coordinator who shared their experiences of onboarding new volunteers, training opportunities, leadership development, and fostering mutually beneficial relationships with local served agencies (keyword: *relationships*). The one area we are still trying to get right is the ARRL Membership Forum. So much of what I hear in the ARRL booth should be asked in our forum! There really are great questions and ideas! We'll work toward turning these sessions into an opportunity for us to talk *with* members, rather than talking *to* members.

Going to an event as large as HamCation and seeing longtime friends reinforced fundamental truths: life is short, there's never enough time, but ham radio is a hobby that binds us across the miles and across the years. I encourage you to get to one of the major ham radio events this year or next. We'd love to meet you!

So stay radio active! Be that connector who comes to the big shows to meet face to face with those fellow hams you've known by radio for years. We'll see you soon!

### Upcoming Major Conventions

Search for more hamfests and conventions at [www.arrl.org/hamfests](http://www.arrl.org/hamfests).

- ◆ ARRL Roanoke Division Convention — Raleigh Hamfest Raleigh, North Carolina | April 16, 2022
- ◆ Dayton Hamvention® and featuring ARRL EXPO Xenia, Ohio | May 20-22, 2022
- ◆ ARRL Northwestern Division Convention — SEA-PAC Seaside, Oregon | June 3-5, 2022
- ◆ HAM RADIO International Amateur Radio Exhibition Friedrichshafen, Germany | June 24-26, 2022
- ◆ ARRL Southeastern Division Convention — Huntsville Hamfest Huntsville, Alabama | August 20-21, 2022
- ◆ ARRL New England Division Convention — Northeast HamXposition Marlborough, Massachusetts | August 26-28, 2022

David A. Minster, NA2AA  
Chief Executive Officer