

The Calendar

No. 180, March 15, 2000

IARU 75th Anniversary, 18 April 2000

The first two-way transoceanic amateur radio communication took place in November 1923. Almost overnight, such contacts became almost commonplace as amateurs throughout the world discovered the remarkable potential of the "short waves." Just as quickly came the realization that radio was by its very nature an international medium, and that there was a need for an international organization to represent radio amateurs.

ARRL President Hiram Percy Maxim, W1AW, had already scheduled a business trip to Europe for 1924. Such an excursion was quite an undertaking in those days, involving as many days on an ocean liner as overseas trips today require hours on a jet plane. The ARRL Board of Directors asked Mr. Maxim to represent the League in fostering international relations between amateurs while he was abroad. This, of course, he was delighted to do.

An informal meeting was called for March 12, 1924, in Paris, to discuss the formation of an international organization. Representatives from France, Great Britain, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Luxembourg, Canada, and the United States attended. There was considerable enthusiasm for the idea of such an organization, and agreement was quickly reached on the name and on the calling of an International Amateur Congress the following year for the purpose of creating the IARU.

During the Easter holidays of April 1925, radio amateurs from 23 countries in Europe, North and South America, and Japan met again in Paris to create the IARU and to adopt a constitution. The original IARU was organized quite differently from today, but the goals were much the same: to promote and coordinate amateur radio worldwide, to encourage fraternalism and to represent amateur radio at international conferences.

On April 17, 1925, the constitution of the IARU was unanimously adopted by the organizing Congress. At a closing assembly on the following day, officers were elected and the actions of the Congress ratified by representatives from 25 countries. Thus, April 18 became the official "birthday" of the IARU and is now designated World Amateur Radio Day.

In *Two Hundred Meters and Down*, the definitive history of the early years of Amateur Radio published in 1936, Clinton B. DeSoto noted that the original constitution provided for individual memberships in the IARU; a federation was deemed impractical because most countries lacked a strong national society. By 1928 conditions had improved to the point where a federative model was more appropriate and the constitution was amended accordingly. By the end of the following year there were 14 national member societies, a number that had grown to 33 by the outbreak of World War II hostilities.

In its early years the IARU devoted itself to encouraging the development of national societies in as many countries as possible, coordinating international Amateur Radio communication, and representing the interests of radio amateurs at international telecommunications conferences and meetings. The pattern thus established has continued to the present day.

Revisions to the IARU Constitution have kept pace with Amateur Radio's increasingly international flavor. For example, following World War II several European societies concluded that the peculiar needs of Europe that then existed required special measures, and invited the Radio Society of Great Britain to establish a Region 1 bureau of the IARU. This became the IARU Region 1 Division, corresponding to the ITU radio region. IARU Region 1 is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Similar organizations came into being somewhat later in Regions 2 and 3. The regional organizations were formally recognized by constitutional revision in 1975. Today the regional organizations cooperate through the mechanism of the IARU Administrative Council, established in 1982, which meets at least annually.

Through the patient efforts of several generations of internationally minded volunteers the IARU has continued to grow in numbers, stature, and influence. Today there are 148 national member-societies on the active rolls, representing virtually every country where there are enough radio amateurs to form an organization. Regional conferences are held annually on a rotating basis, so there is one in each region every three years; they provide an invaluable opportunity for face-to-face meetings.

Most important, the IARU is the recognized spokesman for the Amateur and Amateur-Satellite Services at the International Telecommunication Union and the regional telecommunications organizations: CEPT, PATU, CITEL, and APT. In May a four-member team is slated to represent the IARU at the World Radiocommunication Conference, WRC-2000, in Istanbul. Other amateurs will be present as members of their national delegations, having earned their position by virtue of the respect that is held by their countries' telecommunications administrations for their IARU member-societies.

REF-Union, the IARU member-society for France, has organized a 75th anniversary celebration in Paris for the afternoon and evening of April 18. REF-Union traces its own roots to the same meeting that gave birth to the IARU, so it has a special reason to celebrate. The IARU officers, regional officials, and the presidents of several member-societies are expected to attend.

It is appropriate that on this anniversary we take a moment to reflect on the vision and the leadership of those who came before us, who gathered in Paris in 1924 and 1925. They could have spent Easter holiday doing something that might have been more fun than staying up all night drafting constitutional provisions in two languages. What if they had? Would Amateur Radio be the extraordinary international phenomenon that it is today?

It is also appropriate to look ahead. So much of the history of Amateur Radio remains to be experienced! It is exciting to contemplate what the world of Amateur Radio will be like when our successors gather in Paris for the IARU centennial, April 18, 2025. -- David Sumner, K1ZZ, Secretary, IARU

Administrative Council Releases Lillehammer Summary Record

The IARU Administrative Council has released the 22-page Summary Record of its meeting in Lillehammer, Norway, 26-28 September 1999. A copy is enclosed with this Calendar. The Summary Record is also available at the IARU Web site at: <http://www.iaru.org/ac-99min.html>.

Other recent additions to the IARU Web site include:

Status Summary of Radio Amateurs & Amateur Stations of the World as of 20 December 1999, <http://www.iaru.org/statsum99.html>

Resolutions and Policies of the Administrative Council and Terms of Reference of Administrative Council Appointees, <http://www.iaru.org/ac-respol.html>

Summary Record of the IARU International Amateur Radio Satellite Forum, San Diego, 8 October 1999, <http://www.iaru.org/satellite/forum99.html>

Revised Action Plan for 7 MHz, <http://www.iaru.org/ac-7mhz.html>

Documents can now be made available electronically faster than paper copies can be distributed. Please check the IARU Web site occasionally for new documents as they are released.

Society Annual Reports Due

It is time for member-societies to submit their annual reports. Please complete the enclosed form and return it to the International Secretariat as soon as possible.

The enclosed Status Summary for 1999 shows that a number of member-societies did not complete forms last year. It is important that we have up-to-date information on amateur radio in each country so we may report an accurate picture of the health of amateur radio worldwide. Thank you for your cooperation.

New QSL Bureau Address for Finland

The Finnish Amateur Radio League's QSL-bureau has a new address. All QSLs to OF-OJ call signs should be now sent to:

SRAL QSL BUREAU
P.O. BOX 73
FIN-11111 RIIHIMAKI
FINLAND

Sincerely,

David Sumner, K1ZZ
Secretary

Enclosures:

- Administrative Council Summary Record, Lillehammer, 1999
 - Status Summary of Radio Amateurs & Amateur Stations of the World as of 20 December 1999
 - Society Annual Report Form for 2000
- Return envelope