

**ARRL Historical Committee
Report to the ARRL Board of Directors
July 2026
Dave Propper, K2DP – Chair**

1. Committee Meetings – The committee met in person at the January 2026 Board Meeting along with a virtual MS Teams link for those not attending the Board Meeting.
2. Committee Membership and Adjunct Volunteers –
 - a. The ARRL Staff Member assigned to the Historical Committee, Joe Garcia, NJ1Q, has retired from his position at the ARRL after a successful and lengthy career. Joe will be missed by all.
 - b. As of this writing, George Spata, W1GKS, ARRL Lab Manager, has filled in as time permits as the Staff Liaison member of the committee, however, no staff member has been identified to replace Joe Garcia.
3. Committee Tasks – the committee remains committed to its objectives as previously noted:
 - a. Document and preserve the history of the ARRL
 - b. Document and preserve the history of Amateur Radio
 - c. Document and preserve the history of radio communications through Amateur Radio and the technological developments attributed to Amateur Radio
 - d. Document and preserve the history of Amateur Radio equipment manufacturers and their contributions to the development of radio communications technology
 - e. Make as much of this information available to all ARRL members through an “on-line” Virtual Museum, “Radio Alpha.”
 - i. Work on a more sophisticated public interface for Radio Alpha web pages.
4. ARRL Historical Collection Status
 - a. Collection Inventory Evaluations –
 - i. Due to the lack of on-site volunteer staff, no further evaluation of the collection has been undertaken and we do not expect to be providing any additional equipment for the annual ARRL Auction as was done in 2025.
 - ii. No additional donations to the collection have been received in 2026.
 - b. HQ Lobby Display –
 - i. No further updates to the Lobby Display are planned at this time due to a lack of available volunteer staff.

5. ARRL Virtual Museum Software and Web URL's –
 - a. Virtual Museum Activation and Accessibility –The Virtual Museum, aka “Radio Alpha” went live on the ARRL Website in July 2025.
 - b. Virtual Museum – We continue to add to the data base with more than 5000 entries that have now been uploaded to the database by Chuck Penson, WA7ZZE.
 - c. Front end improvement project: (information below provided by Chuck Penson, WA7ZZE, Radio Alpha architect and historian)
 - i. The current Radio Alpha data base relies on the use of the Catalog It HUB. This presents severe limitations that undermine the utility of the data base for researchers, historians and the general public. The Search Engine is deficient and there is no User Interface flexibility.
 - ii. The Catalog It HUB utilizes a highly stripped-down search parser that is fundamentally incompatible with standard amateur radio nomenclature. A simple search may result in the return of thousands of irrelevant results rather than the targeted records the user requires.
 - iii. User Interface and Rigid Framework – The HUB currently restricts our ability to curate a professional, branded web experience that reflects ARRL Standards. While we can alter photo titles, basic background colors and isolated blocks of text, we can not add fundamental organizations pages appropriate to a public facing utility. We are also unable to alter how records are structured or displayed to the end user.
 - iv. Proposed solution is to contract to a software development firm to custom engineer our search engine in a dedicated website, while continuing to use Catalog It as the framework for our data repository. Anticipated costs are \$20-25K plus annual recurring software license fees associated with various plug-ins at \$1500-\$2000. Funding to come from the \$200K fund allocated and reserved for the ARRL Historical Committee. Additional information and proposals from at least two potential developers will be presented separately.
6. Progress on the projects planned for 2026 – The following projects are on our project list to be worked by Volunteer Staff and ARRL HQ support. However, severe limitations of volunteer and staff support have limited progress on these tasks:
 - a. inventory reconciliation of ARRL historical collection including, equipment, historical artifacts, books and other documentation – Work by our team of on-site volunteers continues but is not completed.
 - b. uploading of photographic documentation of amateur radio equipment to the Museum Catalog It data base.
 - c. Photographing pertinent equipment, artifacts and documentation from the ARRL collection to be displayed on the Virtual Museum website. Harold Kramer, WJ1B, is working on this project which can be done simply with a Smart Phone Camera and a table top “photo studio” – work continues on this project
 - i. Convert relevant books and documentation to pdf format for access through the Virtual Museum website

- ii. Populate the Virtual Museum software data base with the graphic, text and pdf files
 - d. Curate the museum collection - Work continues to “fine tune” the collection.
7. Current Committee Roster

ARRL Historical Committee Membership - 07/09/2026

first name	last name	call	ARRL position	e-mail	Status
Rod	Blocksome	KØDAS	former Chair	rod.blocksome@gmail.com	active
Harold	Kramer	WJ1B	volunteer	wj1b@arrl.net	on leave
Dick	Norton	N6AA	Director Southwestern Div	richardjnorton@yahoo.com	active
George	Papp	K1YBO	volunteer	gpapp@snet.net	active
Chuck	Penson	WA7ZZE	volunteer	wa7zze@gmail.com	active
Dave	Propper	K2DP	Chair - Vice Director Midwest Div	k2dp@arrl.org	active