

## Ethics and Elections Committee

### January 2014 Report

For the second year in a row, the big story from Ethics and Elections concerns online elections. The 2013 election for Director of Southeastern Division had a disappointing voter turnout.

We remind everyone on the Board that there is a limited time from the announcement of the election results to contest them. Waiting until the results of the election are known is not the most credible way to contest it. In any case, candidates must contest the election within 5 days of ballot counting [<http://www.arrl.org/arrrules-regulations> last entry under "Time Table for ARRL Director and Vice Director Elections"] E&E did receive a request to investigate the election, but outside the 5-day window, and with no specific identification of irregularities in the election process.

E&E believes that the electronic elections have been conducted with extreme rigor by SBS, our contracted voting organization. E&E thanks Vice President Bellows for monitoring the final count. E&E observes that factors suppressing turnout do not favor one candidate over the other. Nonetheless, we also agree that the overall level of participation has been disappointing. At the request of the E&E committee, staff published a reminder in the ARRL Letter and the Web News encouraging the membership to vote; though this helped, final participation was still low at 13.1%. Were this true only for this year's election, this would be a concern; but the Division elections in 2012 also had a low turnout. The voting rate was 23.1% in Hudson, 18.3% in the Northwestern Division. The Hudson Division experienced the Sandy storm in 2012, which might have disrupted voting. However, in the Northwestern and Southeastern Division elections, we are unaware of any external factor that might have reduced voter participation.

The 2013 E&E has discussed the low participation level extensively, but has not conclusively identified its cause(s). With little time remaining in 2013, there has not been time to mount a broader assessment, so the 2013 E&E continues this assignment to the 2014 committee. Also, utilizing electronic voting is expensive when only one or two positions are contested, so the cost and benefit of this method will be a broader topic for study in 2014.

Otherwise in 2013, E&E as usual ruled on candidate eligibility. This is usually a routine activity, but we did have to disqualify one candidate (for appointment to fill an un-expired term) based on a gap of a few months of League membership that exceeded the renewal grace period. This was a difficult decision, though there was no question about the relevant facts. The Board is reminded of this eligibility criterion.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory P. Widin, KOGW, Dakota Division Director (Chair)

Cliff Ahrens, KOCA, Midwest Division Director

Dennis Bodson, W4PWF, Roanoke Division Director