

Joe Walsh, WB6ACU — No Ordinary Average Ham

*I'm just an ordinary average guy
My friends are all boring
And so am I
We're just ordinary average guys.*
~From "Ordinary Average Guy,"
by Joe Walsh

Well, yes and no... Although his experiences through several decades as storied rock singer/songwriter might lead you to expect something entirely different, Joe Walsh, WB6ACU, does seem like a pretty ordinary guy. When the Eagles guitarist, solo artist, songwriter—and longtime ham—graciously took a few minutes to talk during his first visit to ARRL HQ and W1AW on March 6, he was soft-spoken, unpretentious and eager to put in a good word about his favorite hobby. There's more about the visit of Joe Walsh and Bob Heil to ARRL Headquarters on the ARRLWeb (www.arrl.org).

What was your biggest surprise when you first saw the ARRL HQ building and W1AW?

I didn't realize there was that many people involved. I thought it was a nice station in an old vintage building and some offices where they put together the magazine. [I had] never thought about overseeing the volunteer infrastructure and all the rest of what goes on here, like the QSL Bureau and awards certificates. The people here aren't here for the money. They're dedicated people, I can see that—it's a real team. I have to look at the League a little differently—I took a lot of it for granted. I wish every ham could come here and visit.

[Some hams say] the League doesn't care about this or that...I want to say to them, "Hey look—come here and meet the people that work here. You'll look at

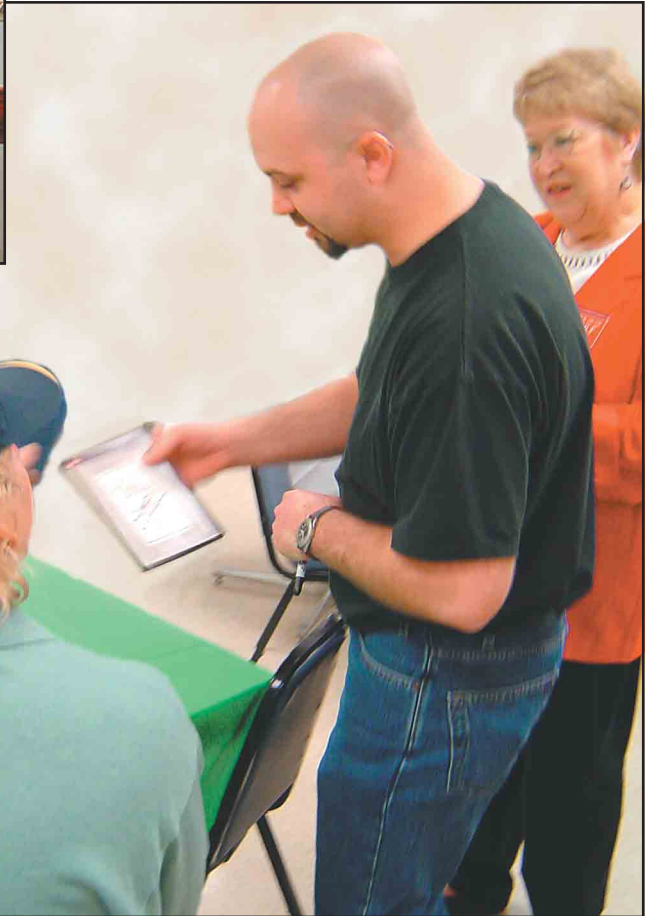


During their tour of the ARRL HQ building, the noted microphone designer Bob Heil, K9EID, and Joe Walsh, WB6ACU, met ARRL staffers, including Senior News Editor Rick Lindquist, N1RL (right).



Joe and Bob, flanking ARRL Chief Executive Officer David Sumner, K1ZZ, were the guests of honor at a donor reception Friday evening.

ARRL staff also had a chance to meet Joe at an autograph session Friday afternoon. Dan Wolfgang brought along an Eagles DVD. Helen Dalton, KB1HLF, is up next.



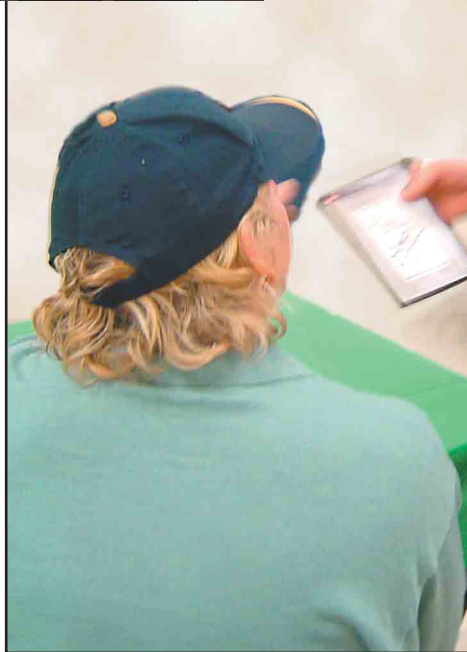
it in a whole new way.” There isn’t a person in there who wouldn’t jump right in to help me in some way—and not because I’m a celebrity in some circles.

What did you enjoy the most about your visit?

Meeting the people, one on one, shaking hands. When you get on the air and become buddies and meet at Dayton, you say, “How could that voice come out of you—you’re not supposed to look like that!” It’s the same thing with the League—you don’t know what you’ll find until you get here. [After touring ARRL Headquarters] you can really appreciate the League.

What was your first station like?

I was licensed as WV2KAC in 1961 in Queens, New York. I had one crystal



Joe enjoyed working the ARRL International DX Phone Contest from W1AW.

on 7152, a Heath DX-20 and a BC-348 [a WW 2-era receiver]. I got my General later on, and have been on the air on and off ever since.

What effect has Amateur Radio had on your life?

Amateur Radio has done nothing but make my life more fun, more interesting. I have friends around the world. And they *stay* friends, you know?

What’s your most memorable ham radio experience?

Ali, A61AJ, in Dubai invited us over a few years ago. John Brosnahan [WØUN] was there. We operated the CQWW Phone Contest. It was my first big contest. For the first time, I got it—I got to grasp the rush and excitement, being the object of a pileup. He’s got quite a contest station.

What have you been up to recently, ham radio-wise?

I joined the Southern California DX Club—it’s a really good club. I’m going to hang out with those guys. I’ve still got a lot to learn.

Photos by the author except as noted.

