

ARRL Board of Directors  
2004 Annual Meeting

Document # 29

## **REPORT OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

### **Executive Summary/Mission Statement**

"The PRC is a national-level committee which reports to the ARRL Board of Directors via the Board Liaison. Members are appointed by the ARRL President for one-year terms, with options for reappointment. The PRC has two primary missions. The first is to provide guidance to the ARRL PR staff in presenting the story of Amateur Radio to the public at large, the press, and to the amateur community at the national level. This includes recommending strategies for attracting new hams, and for recruiting and retaining ARRL members. The second is to support and encourage the development of the local Public Information Coordinators and Public Information Officers in the field by providing PR education, guidance and public relations tools to assist them in their efforts. The PRC also from time to time undertakes special projects as assigned by the ARRL Board of Directors and/or the ARRL President."

### **Summary of PRC Actions During 2003:**

- President Haynie appointed Jeff Reinhardt to chair the PRC in January
- The PRC has restructured its approach toward building the "grass roots" communications apparatus in the Amateur Radio community through the Public Information Coordinators (PICs) and the Public Information Officers (PIOs).
- The PRC formulated and implemented the "grass roots" initiative to energize the field organization's publicity efforts.
- The PRC implemented monthly conference calls targeted toward the execution of the PRC's missions, identifying emerging opportunities and marking progress toward committee goals.
- The PRC held an in-person planning meeting with several committee members at the Dayton Hamvention. This is an annual effort to meet, with travel and lodging expenses borne by each respective PRC member.
- A Public Relations forum was staged at Dayton, drawing a significant audience.
- A similar forum was presented at the ARRL National Convention in Arlington, TX.
- The PRC has established an updated PR Manual for field operatives on the ARRL web site.
- Two PowerPoint presentations on PR related club activities are present on the ARRL Web site.
- The PRC recommended Tim Lewallen for the Phillip McGan Award.
- PRC members agreed to stage PR Forums at several convention venues in 2004 including the Ham University in January, the Miami Convention, Dayton, Southwest Division, Indianapolis, Charlotte, Timonium and more, to be determined.
- In an effort for the PRC to conduct more forums in an attempt to "jump start" field PR efforts, the PRC has requested a modest augmentation to its budget for 2004. The purpose of the additional funding is to provide travel assistance to PRC members in an effort to present PR Forums at hamfests where they have not been a "standard" component. Travel assistance would

be subject to approval by the PRC chair and would not be approved for attending hamfests within easy reach of the designated PRC member.

- The PRC has been a standing source of suggestions and comments on publicity efforts through the PR reflector.
- The PRC has just submitted its recommendation for the 2003 Bill Leonard, W2SKE, Professional Media Award winner. Jen Hagy is sending a motion to Director Bodson, as the recommended winner is in Manassas, VA.

An expansion of these points and detailed information is found on the following pages.

## **I. Mission Statement**

At the July 2003 Board meeting, the Board approved the revised mission statement cited at the beginning of this report.

## **II. The "Grass Roots Initiative"**

The first year of the Grass Roots Initiative (GRI) saw determined efforts from the PRC to reach out to local clubs in attempts to stimulate local activity.

As stated in the July report, "The initiative is an effort to gear up the efforts of the Field Organization to take our message to the streets. Consistent with the two-fold mission of the PRC, the objectives of the Grass Roots Initiative are to get the field operatives trained to a higher level of ability, and importantly gain confidence in their abilities to communicate with the media and the ham radio community.

Field Organization operatives must be able to establish contact with members of the media. They must also be key members of their respective clubs, communicating what's happening in Amateur Radio and quite frankly, conveying information to the membership that makes them proud to be associated with the hobby. We must build their pride and confidence.

To ultimately succeed, The Grass Roots Initiative needs to get PR skills training where it is needed most, at the club level. The PRC has started that process, with the following:

1. The field-use online PR manual has been updated by PRC members.
2. The PRC has created sample news releases and PowerPoint shows for field use.
3. The news reflectors for PIOs and PICs have been used to good effect. Their use is sporadic.
4. The PRC and its members have conducted a string of educational and entertaining PR "How To" Forums at national and local conventions. However, many conventions are not easily accessed by members of the PRC. Toward this end, part of the enhanced funding requested for use by the PRC would be used to transport PRC members to key conventions to present PR Forums. It is a PRC objective to see a PR Forum as a part of every ARRL convention.

5. The PRC believes it is important to include a PR orientation component at SM and Director training sessions. Otherwise, we may be overlooking an important building block.

### **III. PRC Interaction and Operation**

The PRC is comprised of an interesting cross-section of professionals with impressive accomplishments at the national and grass roots levels. The committee communicates via a PRC reflector, individual e-mails, point-to-point phone calls, through monthly conference calls and in-person, usually at the Dayton Hamvention (with travel and lodging at each member's own expense).

The present PRC budget is \$500, which does not cover the cost of the monthly conference calls that the chair initiated this year. A more realistic PRC budget would include a sufficient allocation for the conference calls, the ability to buy breakfast for those who spend their own money to attend the PRC meeting at Dayton and allow for a PRC member to attend local regional conventions to present PR Forums as appropriate.

During 2003 members of the PRC included:

Sherri Brower W4STB	Vero Beach, FL	Former McGan Award Recipient
David Greer N4KZ	Frankfort, KY	Print and Broadcast Media Editor
Diane Ortiz K2DO	Bellport, NY	Newsday employee, McGan winner
Gary Johnston KI4LA	Edgewood, KY	Former, Board Member & Liaison
Rich Moseson W2VU	Bloomfield, NJ	Editor of CQ, former ARRL SM
Jim McDonald KB9LEI	Muncie, IN	Indiana PIC
Gary Pearce KN4AQ	Cary, NC	Former McGan Award Recipient
Bob Jusuweit WA3PZO	Philadelphia, PA	PIC Eastern PA, Columnist
David Woolweaver K5RAV	Harlington, TX	Board Liaison
Jeff Reinhardt AA6JR	Agoura Hills, CA	Chair, Marketing/PR Professional

The PRC was not able to achieve all its goals in 2003. Every member had to face challenges of balancing family and professional obligations with their volunteerism. We had some very difficult situations in 2003 and some tragedy. Nevertheless, the PRC made significant advances, secured elements of its infrastructure and laid the foundation for building the GRI in 2004.

Committee members are encouraged to interact with one another and also with ARRL staff liaison Jennifer Hagy.

In addition, the chair communicates with the Board Liaison David Woolweaver, and when appropriate, with President Haynie.

As mentioned, it was a challenging year for several PRC members. David Greer has submitted his resignation from the PRC, which he has served with distinction on two different occasions.

Gary Pearce, KN4AQ, also submitted his resignation due to work and other ham radio responsibilities. The group extended its deepest condolences to PRC member Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO, whose wife passed away in October. In addition, Jeff Reinhardt has accepted a (time intensive) new employment situation that limits his ability to chair the committee. He has asked President Haynie to be excused from chairing the committee but will continue to serve on the PRC if nominated to do so.

#### **IV. Awards**

The PRC makes recommendations to the Board on awards for Public Relations and Professional News Media coverage.

This year, The Phillip J. McGan Silver Antenna Award drew nominations that were not, in the opinion of the PRC, consistent with the objectives of the award. During a PRC conference call, instead of refusing to grant the award, the PRC chose to exercise its discretion and recommend to the Board that the award be granted to Tim Lewallen KD5ING for his noteworthy publicity on behalf of Amateur Radio in the aftermath of the Columbia disaster. This relative newcomer to PR activity conducted media relations "by the book," with excellent results, making use of support resources through the ARRL and impressing both the media and the responding agencies involved in the Columbia event. After considering the PRC's request, it was decided to resolicit for the McGan Award, which was ultimately awarded to Mr. Lewallen.

The PRC recommended the Board present a unique Lifetime Achievement Award to Dave Bell W6AQ, which it did at the Southwestern Division convention held in Long Beach in September. Mr. Bell was sincerely appreciative of the honor and the award presentation was a very special moment at the convention banquet. The PRC thanks the Board for conferring this unique honor.

As noted earlier in this report, the PRC has made a recommendation for the 2003 Bill Leonard, W2SKE, Professional Media Award. The committee is recommending that the honor be given to Sari Krieger, staff writer for the Potomac News and the Manassas Journal Messenger in Manassas, VA.

#### **V. Recommendations**

For 2004, it is recommended the PRC continue its efforts, consistent with its mission statement with an eye toward building field publicity efforts. Some goals to attempt in 2004 might include:

1. Further development of the GRI with an implementation program integrated with and through the Section Managers.
2. The PRC should expand with an eye toward media diversity (a mix of print and broadcast professionals) and geographic diversity. We need to examine drawing PRC members from media centers across the country, in the hope their expertise and teaching abilities (for the GRI) can be applied.

3. It is understood the Board faces difficult financial decisions, yet a modest investment of only a few thousand dollars in supporting PRC presentations at regional conventions can reap significant media dividends that have substantial dollar value.
4. PR is not a "magic bullet" but it can, and should, be a very powerful tool in the League's arsenal. Through the establishment of a speaker's bureau it can take "the word" about ham radio to the clubs and beyond, into the mainstream (such as to service clubs, scout troops, etc.)
5. The League can use the PRC (through the developing GRI) to reach legislators when important to do so.

Finally, I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to have served the League Membership, The Board, and President Haynie as a member of the PRC and as its chair. While much has been done, there is much more yet to do.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeff Reinhardt AA6JR