

**Report of the Public Relations Committee
to the ARRL Board of Directors
January, 2008**

Special Requests to the Board of Directors:

During 2007 Media and Public Relations Manager, Allen Pitts W1AGP and the Public Relations Committee have worked to foster a closer relationship between ARES and PIOs. This relationship is important to amateur radio. Too often we hear criticism that "hams were not mentioned in the media reports about the disaster." While Amateur Radio is often not the story, we *are* the support system for those that are the story. We do have a story to tell about the work of amateur radio and it needs to be told in real time, not past tense. Because of this need we asked the Programs and Services Committee to bring several items to the January 2008 Board of Directors meeting.

First, and most important are policy statements regarding (1) the need for a statement of joint PIO work and promotion by both services in future MoUs and (2) a policy statement by the Board of Directors regarding who should speak on behalf of ARRL to the media during a disaster. There is a need to have clear policies regarding authorizing media releases and statements of ARES activities written into any future MoUs

Second, a special PIO identification badge to allow the press to be able to spot a PIO easily at a scene. We want the media to go to official ARRL PIOs - not just anyone. The press has recognizable badges, usually with PRESS in large type. The ARRL has standard, approved badges for staff, elected officials, and appointees, but they are in various colors and not easily recognized in a crowd of non-amateurs. Something with PIO in large letters would stand out, instead of Public Information Officer in small print that is readable about 10 feet or less away. Since it would be a "badge" or embroidery on a hat that would need OK by HQ or the SM we feel a Board of Directors action is needed. With improving opportunities for regional and national media exposure in conjunction with DHS/FEMA, some means to identify ARRL PIOs would be beneficial.

Third, a Special Recognition Award. The award - or more appropriately, the "recognition of outstanding action" by the PRC would be something from the PRC and not from the Board of Directors. It would be awarded based on action during an emergency event and could be 10 per year or none for several years. The award would be awarded 8-10 weeks after an event. Example: Written on a plaque: "Presented to _____, (name and call.) For outstanding service as an ARRL Public Information Officer in an emergency situation ____ (date of event)."

Activities of the Committee during the second half of 2007:

The Committee recommended a recipient for the 2008 Bill Leonard Award.

Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO and Bill Morine, N2COP are developing a handout that can be given to future McGan award winners and a Powerpoint presentation on McGan and ARRL PR that can be used during an award presentaiton. Bob Josuweit arranged and participated in the presentation of the 2007 McGan award to Dan McMonigle, N3IXQ. Bob has also contacted Mrs. McGan, Phil's brother-in-law and some of the clubs Phil was a member of requesting some additional background on Phil.

Bill Morine, N2COP worked with amateurs in North Carolina to enact a state level PRB-1 antenna law. Amateurs in the Tar Heel state take immense pride that they were able to get the law passed in its first year of introduction, that it is relatively liberal in permitting a 90 foot height, and that NC became the half-way point for the 50 states to have some kind of PRB-1 legislation.

Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO wrote the cover story for the December 2007 Conformity magazine, titled "BPL - Alternative or Trouble." This was a non paid article that he was asked to write based on previous articles he wrote for the magazine. Very favorable comments were received from readers for the well written, non-biased, presentation on the subject. One favorable comment was from a former BPL industry representative who participated in many of the tests in North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Conformity magazine is read by electrical engineers. Some information and pictures for the article were supplied to Bob by W1RFI and W1AGP. The article can be found at: http://www.conformity.com/artman/publish/article_230.shtml

Kevin O'Dell, N0IRW produced a customizable version of the "When All Else Fails..." video PSA and is attempting to get the 2008 video PSA produced locally for no charge.

Allen Pitts W1AGP, Sherri Brower W4STB, Bill Morine N2COP and volunteers from across the country manned the PR booth at the ARRL Expo at the national convention in Huntsville. Bill and Sherri assisted Allen in presenting a Public Relations Forum at Huntsville.

Kevin O'Dell, N0IRW met with Oklahoma Section ARES members at 2 regional meetings and Sherri Brower, W4STB met with Southern Florida ARES members at a section meeting to discuss using PIOs in ARES activations and promoting the 2007 focus on EMCOMM with the new brochure and "Talk on a Disk."

All committee members discussed PR at the League booth and during the League forums plus distributed the new EMCOMM brochure, the 2007 Swiss Army Knife, and the "Talk on a Disk" CD. Committee members contributed to the monthly PR E-zine, "Contact."

Collaborative work has already begun with Katie Breen of Membership to achieve the Board goal of 30,000 newly licensed Amateur Radio operators in 2008. Katie's idea of creating a "package deal" for groups including all that is needed from initial promotional materials through licensing to open house Elmering, including a packaged "Talk on a disk" type presentation met with enthusiasm from the Committee when she joined us during our December teleconference.

We have provided to Norm Fusaro W3IZ, Clubs/Mentor Manager short articles, about the value of ARRL membership, for clubs to use in newsletters and dues reminder mailings. These articles are included in the monthly Clubs E-letter.

Planning for the Future

Several years ago, in a PSC report to the Board it was stated that SMs must understand the importance of public relations to the survival of Amateur Radio and give a higher priority to the public information function - especially in regard to emergency operations. The current PR tools, especially the "Talk on a Disk" CD assisted in this area, but more effort is needed. The PR Committee would like the Board members to actively promote the PR materials at hamfest forums and in their newsletters. We would also like to hold PR forums at ARRL state and section conventions, but without promotion from the directors these forums take a back seat to ARES and operating mode forums. Members look to the Board members for direction and the Board can assist Field Operations by mentioning the volunteer appointment opportunities for members in newsletters and at hamfests.

The 2008 planned campaign will focus on the technological advancements resulting from amateur radio operators. We feel that this will be a viable tool to recruit new amateurs.

The materials created from the PR campaigns are viable for several years and Board support for other departments to continue reproducing the materials is requested.

It has been a pleasure to work with the 2007 Public Relations Committee:

Rich Moseson W2VU, Jim McDonald KB9LEI, Bob Josuweit WA3PZO, Bill Morine N2COP, Kevin O'Dell N0IRW, Gordon West WB6NOA, and Board of Directors Liaison, Vice Director Joyce Birmingham, KA2ANF. I thank all of them for their time, effort, support, and dedication.

Respectfully submitted,
Sherri Brower, W4STB
Chairman ARRL Public Relations Committee