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**Contest Advisory Committee
Semi-Annual Report
For the American Radio Relay League
Board of Directors Meeting**

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Part 1

Submitted by

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Proposed Contest Advisory Committee Issues for 2015

Potential 2015 Projects for the ARRL CAC

In 1Q15, the CAC considered 12 topics as possible projects or issues to be evaluated by the CAC during the balance of 2015. This list of topics was derived from conversations that K5KG had with each of the committee members, and input from various members when queried about issues that should be addressed by the CAC.

After considerable deliberation by the committee members, each of the 16 members cast his vote on the priority of each topic based on a scale from 0 to 5, with 0 being “no opinion” to 5 being the highest priority. The result of that effort was presented in April to Doug Rehman, K4AC, and CAC’s liaison on the PSC.

What is presented in this report is the result of the voting by the CAC members based on the average of the 16 votes on each topic. The top five topics were classified as **HIGH**, the second five as **MEDIUM**, and the bottom two as **LOW**.

SUMMARY OF TOPICS	PRIORITY	VOTE AVG.
Youth in Contesting	High	2.44
Develop a CAC Mission statement	High	2.38
Revise the ARRL Handbook for CAC Members	High	2.19
Conduct ARRL Contest Survey	High	2.13
Remote Ham Radio	High	2.13
Get Tough On Cheating	Med	2.00
Replace the MAR multiplier with NB, NS, and PEI in Sweepstakes	Med	1.94
Reform ARRL Contest Awards Structure	Med	1.88
Adopt ARRL Centennial QSO Party for future years	Med	1.81
CAC Archives	Med	1.75
Add a CAC member to represent the non-Continental US Sections	Low	1.56
Mobile Entry Category in ARRL 10 m Contest	Low	1.38

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TOPIC DETAILS

1. Youth in Contesting

PRIORITY HIGH — AVERAGE VOTE: 2.44

Identify and recommend ideas for incenting youth to participate in contesting. Some ideas are:

- Expose youth to ways they can participate in a contest from their home computer [via RHR] as an alternative to computer games.
- Implement Youth Entry Categories in ARRL contests, with appropriate score incentives.
- Encourage dxpeditions to include youth members in their trips, and develop ways to help with related expenses.
- Define the age for “Youth”. [For example, the Boy Scouts will not allow a Scout to be awarded the Eagle Rank at the age of 18 and above.]

One of our members expressed strong concern for involving youth in contesting, knowing full well that the present population of testers is aging. He cited an example of the big dxpeditions that are being conducted by aging hams who 5 to 10 years in the future will not be able to repeat their dxpeditions, and questions “who will step up to replace them?” Further, he stated, “Everyone involved in this hobby should be thinking about this because it isn't improving, it's accelerating. And the fact that raw numbers of hams are increasing is irrelevant because many of them are “CERT wannabes”. Why not offer a 10% net point bonus for every tester on your team making at least 500 Qs and having an age of less than 30? That might do some good. Example, you take 5 guys to PJ2T for a contest, you score 10m points, two of the guys are <30 and each make >500 Qs; your score is now 12m.”

2. Develop a CAC Mission statement

PRIORITY HIGH — AVERAGE VOTE: 2.38

In a conversation with one of our long-standing CAC members, he questioned the role of the CAC which, in his view, has been interpreted in many different ways over the years. Without getting into questions he brought up regarding the committee's operation, he stated emphatically that the CAC needs a mission statement. Knowing that this individual

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has a long history with the CAC, and after all these many years feels strongly that it needs a mission statement, development of a CAC Mission Statement has been added to the list.

3. **Revise the ARRL Handbook for Contest Advisory Committee Members**

PRIORITY HIGH — AVERAGE VOTE: 2.19

K5KG took over as Chairman of the CAC in January 2015, but was not presented with the ARRL Handbook for CAC Members, nor did he have any knowledge of its existence at the time. In a subsequent conversation with one of the CAC members, and asking if there was anything that defined the “rules of the road for the CAC”, he learned that a handbook that spelled out the operation of the CAC had existed in the past. George then contacted Dave Patton, NN1N, who confirmed its existence and sent George a copy dated January 2004. To quote in the handbook’s introduction, “The ARRL Procedure Committee spent over a year working out the processes contained in the Handbook. It was written to clarify ambiguities that previous Committee members expressed to their chairman, their Director, ARRL staff, and other Board members”.

This Handbook has **NOT** been a working document for the CAC in recent years; a quick review revealed that many of its guidelines are not being followed. It is, therefore, recommended that the document be thoroughly reviewed, necessary changes adopted, and the CAC follow its guidelines going forward. Any recommended changes to the document would presumably be submitted to the PSC and HQ for approval.

4. **Conduct ARRL Contest Survey.**

PRIORITY HIGH — AVERAGE VOTE: 2.13

This issue is being resurfaced from the 2014 CAC list. Building on the success of the Contest Survey that was conducted by the sponsors of the CQ Contests, conduct a similar survey of testers with a focus on the ARRL Contests. A driver for this initiative will be to understand the wants, desires, opinions, likes, dislikes, etc., of testers with regard to ARRL HF Contests. K5ZD who manages the CQ Contests has agreed to assist with the survey.

5. **Remote Ham Radio**

PRIORITY HIGH — AVERAGE VOTE: 2.13

One member made the point that Remote Ham Radio (RHR) is an interesting issue that deserves some thought, and that thought should be coordinated with DXAC for obvious

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reasons. He stated his support for RHR because so many stations are, in essence, antenna restricted. He had an interesting idea that the League should “be building these stations and making them available to hams at a nominal cost recovery fee. We should support development of the technology and deployment of RHR stations for contesting - within the existing legal framework of course”.

6. Get Tough On Cheating

PRIORITY MEDIUM — AVERAGE VOTE: 2.00

One member feels that there needs to be a clamp down on cheating. He stated this: “In my mind cheating includes not playing by the rules like XEs refusing to work US-manned stations in ARRL 10 so they can hand their 26 or so mults to their buddies”. He suggested a simple response is to warn [first], then to act by removing the XE multipliers.

7. Replace the MAR multiplier with NB, NS, and PEI in Sweepstakes

PRIORITY MEDIUM — AVERAGE VOTE: 1.94

This is an issue has been bantered about for some time, but has not been on the docket for the CAC. This is an issue that has been raised by some testers in NB, NS, and PEI who feel that being lumped together in a Section name of MAR, for Maritime, is outdated and should be eliminated and replaced by the designators for their separate Provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

Here is excerpt from an email from CAC member, Sam Ferris, VE5SF on 3/16/2015:

“Hi George: As far as I know his concern is about Sweepstakes. As far as I know at present MAR only appears as a multiplier in Sweepstakes and is used on Field Day - however Field Day is not a contest. The multipliers for Sweepstakes are based on ARRL/RAC Field section[s] as in the RAC and ARRL Field Services areas that provide help for public service events, ARES and other emergency related operations,. There seems to be a bit of a linkage to traffic handling given the nature of the Sweepstakes longer contest exchange. I raised the issue with Al [K0AD] on behalf of Mike [VE9AA] some time back however the committee never got to it. Following the most recent round of complaints from Mike and possibly others on the CQ Contest interweb [email] reflector, it was my understanding that eventually the complaint emails made their way to Dave Sumner at ARRL. The message I got from Geoff Bawden (RAC President) was that RAC was advised that ARRL would consider RAC's recommendation, however there is no separate Field Service sections for PEI, NS and NB at present and there does not seem to

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be significant interest in creating such field service sections. Currently there is a "Maritime" Field Services section covering these provinces (see: <https://www.rac.ca/en/rac/public-service/section-managers/>).

I am not arguing for or against the idea ... just wanted to give you some of the background I have. I also have some emails here on the subject as RAC executive met by conference call on the subject a few months back now. If you would like to see those I can forward for you as well - no secrets here."

8. Reform the ARRL Contest Awards Structure

PRIORITY MEDIUM — AVERAGE VOTE: 1.88

A CAC member has suggested that the following topic be added to the 2015 project list as a high priority issue.

ARRL contest categories are inherently highly fragmented because the awards structure is based upon the ARRL/RAC Sections. There are in excess of 80 Sections, so every entry class or category (if divided according to HP, LP, and QRP, together with assisted and unassisted classes at each power level) creates, in effect, approximately 500 new award slots nationally. In contrast, the awards structure for CQ contests is not geographically fragmented. CQ typically grants awards by call area, or country. For that reason, CQ can afford to include far more classes or categories without rendering them meaningless.

Why is the Section such a problematic basis for the ARRL awards structure? Quite a few Sections have few, if any, active contesters. To take a low-participation geographical unit, and then to divide it into a full spectrum of categories guarantees that most categories will have no entrant at all, and that many categories will have but a single entrant, who can "win" (and receive a certificate) for submitting a log showing just a single QSO. This is not a desirable system or, for that matter, a fair one.

There are plenty of feasible avenues for reform. Categories that draw few entrants, for example, could be consolidated from the Section level to the Division level, or even to the Region level, so that the categories have a chance of including a meaningful number of participants. In the alternative, some minimum standard of achievement should apply to cert awards in the case of sole-entrant categories. Under such a reform, no cert would be awarded for any entrant who makes a trivial number of contacts or devotes a trivial amount of time the event. Another avenue for reform might be to "retire" or "sunset" any category that consistently draws little, if any, participation.

On the other hand, in some highly active Sections, a second-place entrant who turns in a heroic performance gets nothing. There should be a system of Platinum, Gold, Silver, and

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Bronze awards for participants who make, say, 1,000, 500, 250, or 100 QSOs in a contest, irrespective of whether they achieved the top score in their Section in the particular category.

9. Adopt ARRL Centennial QSO Party for future years

PRIORITY MEDIUM — AVERAGE VOTE: 1.81

Resurface this issue from the 2014 list. Assess the effectiveness of the 2014 Centennial QSO operation and determine if it should be a repeating event, annually or otherwise.

10. CAC Archives

PRIORITY MEDIUM — AVERAGE VOTE: 1.75

Past CAC reports are available on the League's web site. Unfortunately, however, what is missing is a compilation of the issues that were deliberated by the CAC over the years, recommendations that were made, and what was actually implemented or not implemented.

In all likelihood, some issues the CAC debates today have been debated in the past, yet we do not have the history of those debates or the decisions taken. In short, we are missing the background and institutional knowledge of the past. We need to know what went on the past, so we can make rational decisions now.

The essence of this project is to compile an archive of past issues and the recommendations that were made, assess what was implemented (or not), and the consequences thereof.

11. Add a CAC member to represent the non-Continental US Sections

PRIORITY LOW — AVERAGE VOTE: 1.56

A CAC member has suggested that the CAC have a member to represent the contesting interests in the non-Continental US Sections of AK, PAC, PR, and VI. Collectively, these stations are currently represented on the CAC by members from the Northwestern, Pacific, and Southeastern Divisions. The argument for a separate CAC member to represent these "territorial" areas was put forth because of the belief that testers in these areas have very different realities from Continental-bound testers, and having their separate input in CAC issues would be important.

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12. Mobile Entry Category in ARRL 10 m Contest (on a one-year experimental basis)

PRIORITY LOW — AVERAGE VOTE: 1.38

This task is an offshoot of the Mobile Entry Category dealt with by the CAC early in 2015. As part of our deliberations of having a mobile entry category in an ARRL HF contest, one member suggested that “we should contemplate a narrowly constructed, one-year experiment with such a category -- with a declaration at the outset that the experiment should not be expected to lead to a permanent new category unless, that is, the experiment proves to be a resounding success.”

In thinking more about this, K5KG had a conversation with K0AD about the idea of using the ARRL 10m contest as the contest of choice for this idea. 10 m is an easy band for a mobile to operate. This would be an attractive event for those hams who are antenna restricted, yet have HF mobile rigs; especially those who were excited that the CAC was even addressing the idea of a mobile entry category.

Following the lead of our member’s one-year experiment suggestion, these simple ground rules are proposed:

- Single op
- Unassisted
- Low power
- Driver is not permitted to drive and log at the same time (for obvious safety reasons)

-End-

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July 2015

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