

Report of the Public Relations Committee

Midyear 2012

By Steven Polunsky, W5SMP, Chair

2012 began for the Public Relations Committee with the peaceful transfer of the gavel from visionary leader Bill Morine N2COP to Steven Polunsky W5SMP. Fortunately, Bill stayed on the board, which now includes Board Liaison James Boehner N2ZZ, Don Carlson KQ6FM, Kevin O'Dell N0IRW, Mark Kraham W8CMK, Mark Abramowicz NT3V, Bill Husted KQ4YA, and RAC Liaison Alan Bauld VE3CBR. The PRC is ably and well assisted in its efforts by ARRL staff member Allen Pitts, W1AGP.

The Committee has worked so far to build on the successes of 2011, which may well have been a tipping point year for amateur radio public relations. 2011 saw a record number of licensees, accompanied by recognition that "Radio Days are Back" (<http://www.foxnews.com/scitech/2011/11/17/radio-days-are-back-ham-radio-licenses-at-all-time-high/>) and the appearance of a sympathetic fictional prime-time TV ham in "Last Man Standing's" Mike Baxter KAØXTT. Our goals for 2012 are to maximize our existing efforts and implement new ones to take advantage of trends and changes, including developments in social media.

**Recognition of Individual Efforts.** The ARRL PR newsletter "Contact" provides one of several platforms for recognition of outstanding PIOs and PICs and their efforts. For example, Raymond "Woody" Woodward K3VSA, ARRL Public Information Coordinator for North Carolina, was given space in a recent Contact to share his advice on getting and using pictures in amateur radio PR.

Named awards are potentially our most visible and prestigious method of recognition. The PRC is again pleased to have nominated worthy recipients of the Leonard and McGan awards. We are discussing the possibility of limiting eligibility for the McGan award to PIOs or graduates of the ARRL PR-101 course, as it was created to recognize volunteer excellence in PR (<http://www.arrl.org/phil-mcgan-award>), and we would like to develop or assist in the development of a standard, workable calendar for the receipt of nominations, committee recommendation, finalization, selection, and ceremonies relating to PR awards.

**Field Day.** The PRC supports a multipronged effort to encourage publicity for Field Day. Don Carlson and Allen Pitts created two 30 second audio-format public service Field Day announcements for PIO use. One is designed to be ready for immediate use and the other has space at the end for a PIO to add his or her own contact information. Both are downloadable from the ARRL website. The ARRL publication “Contact” contained a countdown calendar to Field Day with near-daily steps to take for optimal exposure ([http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Media & PR/Contact files/June-2012-FD-PIO-Calendar.doc](http://www.arrl.org/files/file/Media%20&%20PR/Contact%20files/June-2012-FD-PIO-Calendar.doc)), and the PR email reflector reinforced the message. These efforts were productive as evidenced by increased print and broadcast radio recognition of Field Day and the ARRL.

**Webinar on Writing Media Releases.** In preparation for Field Day, the PRC hosted a free webinar for PIOs, PICs, club officers and anyone else wanting to learn the easiest and most effective ways to write up a media release for Field Day and actually get it noticed by local media. PRC members with varied and deep experience in radio, television and print media shared their favorite tips and best advice for novice and experienced release writers.

**Appeal to Maker Community.** The PRC was pleased to support the 2012 ARRL Do It Yourself “DIY” Stage at Dayton Hamvention® and continued outreach to the maker, hacker, and hands on community.

**Use of Video in PR Outreach.** The PRC hosted a webinar in which professional videographers and editors shared tips and “how to” ideas for creating Amateur Radio related video. PRC Committee experts joined by Al Petrunti KA1TCH of the New Day Group shared tips on topics such as:

- Equipment choices
- Tips and tricks in shooting video of hams
- Editing video the easy way - how to take raw video and turn it into a compelling presentation
- Distributing the video to news, YouTube, websites and cable

The webinar was recorded and is available on the ARRL website. Also, two new general promotional 30 second video PSAs, including broadcast quality versions, were made available for viewing, download, and use.

**Elevator Speech.** Simple ideas or conversations can spark an amateur's creativity, as we found when we asked for the best way to describe our hobby in 30 seconds. Chris Tate KJ4UBL provided an excellent response: "Amateur, or ham radio, is a fun hobby for all ages and walks of life in which we can talk to people around the world or across town with a simple radio and antenna. We also work with various agencies to provide real time information in the event of a natural disaster. On the local scale, hams voluntarily provide communications for events such as bike rides and marathons. It's for people just like you; I hope you want to learn more." We hope to encourage more such interaction among amateurs.

In the second half of 2012 we will be identifying topics and scheduling webinars to further the understanding and practice of PR within the ARRL membership.

- We expect to host a webinar on how to present oneself to the media, which would include encouragement to take the ARRL PR-101 course. This course has over 150 graduates. Our next goal is to reach 1 graduate per 1000 ARRL members, and keep going from there.
- We are investigating the inclusion of an ARRL segment on radio shows popular among hams.
- We are excited about the ARRL Centennial and anticipate accelerating our participation in **Advancing the Art and Science of Radio -- since 1914.**
- We have a number of possible initiatives in the pipeline, including a postage stamp honoring amateur radio, virtual trade shows, a Junkyard Wars-like competition, and centennial sponsorships.
- We strongly believe in measurement and evaluation as a way of determining progress towards objectives. We would like to see more measures of PR-related activities become available on a regular basis.

On behalf of the PRC, I would like to express our gratitude for the cheerful and boundless assistance of Allen Pitts. We appreciate and thank the Programs and Services Committee and the Board for their continued support, advocacy, and efforts on behalf of Amateur Radio and amateur radio operators. We look forward to a successful second half of 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Polunsky W5SMP, Chair

Austin, Texas