
REPORT TO THE ARRL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE
OF THE
AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE



ARRL The national association for
Amateur Radio®
CENTENNIAL
Advancing the Art and Science of Radio—Since 1914

JANUARY 2013

REPORT TO THE ARRL BOARD

BY THE PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE, JANUARY 2013

INTRODUCTION

The Public Relations Committee (PRC or committee) appreciates the support and interest of the ARRL Board of Directors and hereby respectfully submits its Report.

COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION AND MEMBERS

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.

Board Liaison: Dr. James Boehner, N2ZZ

Committee Chairman: Steven Polunsky, W5SMP

RAC Liaison: Alan Bauld, VE3CBR

Bill Morine, N2COP

Don Carlson, KQ6FM

Kevin O'Dell, N0IRW

Mark Kraham, W8CMK

Mark Abramowicz, NT3V

Bill Husted, KQ4YA

ARRL Staff: Allen Pitts, W1AGP

ARRL CENTENNIAL

The committee continues to develop ideas and proposals for the centennial. The PRC feels that ARRL field officials should be developing Centennial plans now, but starting no later than the second half of 2013 if events are going to be executed properly in 2014, with the goals being to showcase a proud 100 year history, demonstrate how ARRL continues to support and protect Amateur Radio from many threats, and encourage the 580,000 non-ARRL hams in the USA to become members. The PRC sees part of its role as publicizing suggested club and individual activities through the PR reflector and other methods, hosting webinars aimed at maximizing these efforts, and assisting with supportive materials. The PRC further recommends a focus on outreach to licensed hams who are not ARRL members, and an encouragement for joint Canadian participation.

PRC support would be more effective with funding for such activities as building up promotions for 2014, travel expenses for promotional trips to hamfests and supportive activities during disasters, printed materials including brochures and banners, and other promotional items including talking points, self-executing PowerPoint presentations, and keynote video. The PRC is excited about the centennial and the potentially positive impacts for ARRL and amateur radio and stands ready to assume whatever role the Board assigns.

Centennial Program Guide. The committee continues to support the development of a Centennial Program Guide. This publication would be distributed 3rd and 4th quarter of 2013 to Division Directors, Section Managers and other key ARRL field appointees with the intent of listing dates and events in 2014 requiring field support of Centennial celebrations. It could be published as a freestanding item, available for SM's to pass out at meetings and hamfests, sent to media and ancillary organizations, and included in QST. Funding would be \$5,000.00 from the PR & Media budget for Fiscal 2013.

Time Capsule for QSL cards. Amateur radio operators love their QSL cards and love sharing them. The television show "Last Man Standing" received hundreds of QSL cards for a fictional character, just for asking (see <https://www.facebook.com/KA0XTT>). The ARRL could acquire a time capsule to be used for preserving this centennial moment in time for amateur radio operators. As an interactive exercise, during 2013 to early 2014 have members submit their standard size QSL cards at conventions and hamfests to be put in the capsule. These collection efforts could be supported by an attractive display with appropriate receiving container, and headquarters could also receive cards by mail (visualize a mailbag upended with cards cascading out, a metaphoric image of the exuberance of ARRL members). The capsule would be displayed with the cards arrayed around it at the centennial convention. The capsule would then be buried with appropriate pomp under the bricks at ARRL HQ, to be opened in another 100 years. If we plan for an estimated 50,000 cards, assuming standard card dimensions, the volume required would be about 21,168 cubic inches or 12.25 cubic feet of cards. An example of a professionally made, direct burial time capsule of this size is found at: http://store.heritagetimecapsules.com/XL-Composite-Rectangle_p_23.html with a volume of 13.36 ft³ for a cost of \$2,279.00. The cost could be defrayed by charging \$1 or \$2 per card, or using the effort as a marketing tool, e.g. free with new membership, membership renewal, purchase at the ARRL store, or \$1 at the hamfests and \$2 for mail-ins.

Timeline on a Banner. The visual representation of significant events in a timeline fashion has merit and should be further considered. Banners with timelines would seem to lend themselves to rotating among clubs as a feature or adding perspective to special events.

Centennial Sponsor Banner. Separately, banners denoting a "proud sponsor of the ARRL centennial" could be produced and given to donating merchants for display at their event tables or places of business. Custom 24x36" posters are readily available commercially for around \$10 each, less if purchased in bulk. The posters themselves would have our centennial logo and would be a visual way to link the local hamfests/conventions/related businesses with national.

Real-Time Historical Tweets. A current trend in professional history circles is to recognize significant historical events with real-time memorial tweets (see, for example, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/28/arts/re-enacting-historical-events-on-twitter-with-realtimewii.html> or <http://www.socialphy.com/posts/off-topic/10280/History-in-Real-Time-with-Twitter.html> or http://news.cnet.com/8301-1023_3-57540800-93/retelling-history-140-characters-at-a-time/). Using the timeline developed by Allen Pitts, significant events in the 100 year history of ARRL and a century of communications innovations which the general public enjoys which came all or in part from Ham Radio – AM, FM, TV, cellular phones, wireless data, etc. can be collapsed into the course of a year, with each notable event celebrated in a tweet and linked to sites offering more

information about the event and, of course, ARRL. Cost for this program would be minimal. If the commemorative video is still an option, each tweet could link to an ARRL page featuring the video as well.

Localized Special Events. Some geographical areas stand out in the history of ARRL and radio, and may be open to special events. These could include Armstrong's house along the Hudson where FM was born, Farnsworth's TV laboratory in San Francisco, Fessenden's Brant Rock AM broadcast, Steve Jobs's California home, and, of course, ARRL League HQ. Railroad museums and working depots may also be interested in a commemorative event with displays and active stations.

DISASTERS: THE PR PARADOX

The PRC notes that among amateur radio's finest hours are those spent in response to disasters. These activities could and should be a showcase of our value to the world, but we typically fail in that effort because the ham's focus is rightfully on response efforts, not PR. Hams are the "unsung heroes" as noted in an article in Urgent Communications (<http://urgentcomm.com/blog/singing-praises-unsung-heroes>). Our experience this last year has been that we do not get very many if any real-time reports from the PIOs (or others) on operations in the storm areas, even from places that still have power and Internet. Later, hams will wonder why there is scant recognition for their efforts, even as textual after-action reports trickle in weeks after an event, without any visual support. An educational approach may be needed to emphasize the rapid deterioration of an event's news value in today's 24-hour news cycle, and the importance of providing audio, video, and text for media or for contacting ARRL HQ for help in the midst of responding to a given disaster.

In a related item, the common wisdom developing in social media and being disseminated by mainstream media is to push people toward using smartphones to keep informed when the power goes out. That approach has its merits but is inferior to amateur radio as it is subject to and even contributes to loss of cell tower functionality in a disaster. The risk is even greater with the wireless carriers challenging the FCC's 2007 order for a minimum of 8 hours of backup, and with an appellate court's denial of the order, allowing most cell towers to operate with 4 hours of backup power. This would appear to be an area ripe for a PR effort targeted around power outage events.

SUCCESSOR TO "WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS - HAM RADIO"

The slogan "When all else fails - Ham Radio" has served us well but may be ready for retirement. While it is very popular and has been quite successful in many places, it does raise resentment among other communications people and we understand has caused trouble with served agencies. Consider replacing it with "No Phone, No Internet, No Problem - Ham Radio." This candidate slogan was circulated in draft form on the PR email reflector and among several SEC's with positive response. This slogan retains the brevity, interest and point of the message without being offensive to anyone we can identify. We encourage its adoption and use to replace "When all else fails" as soon as practicable.

THE BILL LEONARD, W2SKE, PROFESSIONAL MEDIA AWARD

The Leonard Award was created as a tribute to the late CBS News President Bill Leonard, W2SKE, an avid Amateur Radio operator, and is a national level, annual award to honor three professional journalists whose outstanding work best reflects the enjoyment, importance and public service value of the Amateur Radio Service. The Award is divided into three categories, each with its

own award - Audio formats, Visual formats, Print and Text formats. Nominations are judged by members of the ARRL national PR Committee, and the final decision is made by the ARRL Board of Directors. The winners each receive an engraved plaque and a donation of \$250 will be made in each of their names to the charity of their choice. Recipients must be professional journalists in print, electronic media or multimedia. The term "professional" refers to full time, part time, stringers, freelancers and contract journalists. In the case of a group project, the recipient may be the group, but only one prize will be awarded.

We look for media pieces that are truthful, clear and accurate, and reflect high journalistic standards. The award will be granted to the works deemed the best reflection of the enjoyment, importance and public service value of Amateur Radio.

2012 was another good year for Amateur Radio in the media. Our emergency actions were praised and there were many stories about the joy of do-it-yourself communications. We even had fewer "old radio" comments. For the 2012 Leonard Award, however, nominations were scant, suggesting better promotion would benefit this program. The nominees were:

1. **Lucy Ann Lance, radio show producer, Ann Arbor, Michigan:** "Saving Lives: Ham Operators and Trained Weather Spotters Credited with Early Tornado Warning." Ms. Lance interviewed Michigan hams on her radio program on station WLBY and was nominated by Pat Mullet, KC8RTW.
2. **Lynn Anderson, Editor, The Best Times, Olathe, Kansas:** "Cruising the Airwaves for Fun and Service." The Best Times is a monthly publication of Johnson County Human Services. Ms. Anderson was nominated by Laurance Staples, Jr. W0AIB.

After careful consideration, the PRC recommends to the Board that the Leonard Award be given to Lucy Ann Lance (audio) and Lynn Anderson (print).

THE PHIL MCGAN, WA2MBQ, MEMORIAL SILVER ANTENNA AWARD

Philip J. McGan, WA2MBQ (SK), served as the first chairman of the ARRL's Public Relations Committee, which helped reinvigorate the League's commitment to public relations. Unfortunately, Phil never got to see how well his efforts paid off. In honor of Phil, his friends in the New Hampshire Amateur Radio Association joined with the ARRL Board of Directors to pay a lasting tribute to the important contributions he made on behalf of Amateur Radio. The McGan award will go to that ham who has demonstrated success in Amateur Radio public relations and best exemplifies the volunteer spirit of Phil McGan.

Anyone may nominate someone for the McGan award. The award is given only to an individual (not a group), who must be a full ARRL member in good standing at the time of nomination. The nominee must not be compensated for any public relations work involving Amateur Radio (including payment for articles) and may not be a current officer, director, vice director or paid staff member, or a member of the current selection committee.

To encourage current PIOs and raise the prestige and importance being a PIO, the committee asks the Board to consider limiting eligibility for the award to PIOs, PICs, and non-PIO graduates of the PR-101 course.

MEASURABLE AND ACHIEVABLE GOALS

The committee would like to see more measurement of League PR activity and tracking of these measures in a way accessible to members. Such measures could include (values are approximate):

- Number of members (160,000)
- Number of members as a ratio of number of licensees (22% or 1 out of 5)
- Number of PIOs (450)
- Number of PIOs as a ratio of total members (1 for every 350 members)
- Number of website hits each month
- Number of unique website users each month

These measures could then be used to set short and long term goals. These goals may be specific to the PRC, may be for the PRC and other committees, or may be for other entities, and could include:

- Set a target of complete geographical coverage by PICs.
- Set a target of 1 PIO per 300 members
- Each quarter, increase the number of PIOs by one per each division.

Further, these measures and goals could be molded to fall under the five pillars (Public Service, Advocacy, Education, Technology, and Membership).

"ABOUT THE PRC" BROCHURE

The committee has been working on a brochure to describe its charge, makeup, and activities. A draft of the proposed text is below, and comments are welcome.

Formal Description: The ARRL Public Relations Committee (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.

How ARRL's PR Program Works: The ARRL Media and Public Relations Department has a paid staff of one (currently vacant). Obviously no one person can do all the things needed to promote such a magnificent hobby and service throughout the country. The solution is that there are three levels of passionate volunteers scattered throughout the country whose work makes Amateur Radio as we know it possible. Each section (there are 71 sections in the USA) should have a Public Information Coordinator (PIC) appointed by the Section Manager (SM). Each PIC,

with approval of the SM, recruits and helps local ARRL Public Information Officers (PIO) in promoting Amateur Radio in their home area. This gives us about 450-500 volunteer PR people scattered throughout the country. With an army like that, how can we fail? The key to success is in continuously providing the PIOs with the very best materials, information and tools that we can. They are the “boots on the ground” that turn abstracts into local news items. So, in addition to basic news releases and messages sent out, the ARRL provides them free access to a host of tools. Audio Public Service Announcements for broadcast radio, Video Public Service Announcements for TV/Cable, “Talk on a Disk” presentations for speaking to groups and clubs, Coordinated campaigns aligned with the primary interests in Amateur Radio including Hello (hobby/fun), Emergency Radio (ARES), and We Do That (technology, D.I.Y. and experimentation). There is also CONTACT! – a monthly electronic magazine for PIOs, and a special PR email reflector to keep up with breaking events and ideas. Public Relations forums are regularly held at major hamfests and conventions to listen and learn of new ways to help PIOs in the field. A new development is sections trying appointments for an “ARES-PIO” – a PIO specifically tasked and trained to work with and in an emergency setting, joint information center, or similar situation.

The Public Relations Committee, then, is a national level committee of about 10 people appointed annually by the President of the ARRL. Comprised of people with extensive experience in different areas of public relations, media work, news and social issues experience, this committee is the “go to” group for PR. They provide support, advice and skilled help to make things happen. The Public Relations Committee 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 media, 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.

This is very much a working committee and appointees realize that it will take time and effort. But it also pays off handsomely in feelings of accomplishment for those whose passion is Amateur Radio. The individual committee member is asked at a minimum to lend his or her expertise and advice to the collective wisdom of the committee. Online committee meetings and email are the primary methods of engagement. In addition, each member is asked to lead at least one special project. The project may be a webinar, publication, production, research initiative, or other activity.

Mission: Develop and disseminate information to support and expand the ARRL and amateur radio.

Goals:

- Support the President and the Board.
- Support and motivate PICs and PIOs.
- Expand the pool of trained PIOs.

OBJECTIVE: Increase number of PIOs

Strategy: Add one PIO per quarter in each division.

Tactic: Work with and through PICs and SMs to identify and contact individuals.

Tactic: Target state capitols and population centers.

Output: [#] PIOs by [date] As of November 2012, there are about 450 formally appointed PIOs.

Target: 500 PIOs by December 1, 2013

Output: [#] PIOs as a ratio of all members by [date] Target: 1 PIO per 1000 members.

OBJECTIVE: Increase number of PR-101 trained PIOs

Strategy: Demonstrate/describe benefits of PR-101 training

Tactic: Acquire testimonials from PR-101 trained PIOs

Strategy: Focus on current PIOs who are not trained.

Tactic: Target one PIO per quarter in each division for training.

Output: [#] PR-101 trained PIOs by [date]. As of November 2012, there are about 180 graduates of the PR-101 course.

OBJECTIVE: Develop and implement plans to carry out the goals.

Strategy: Regular PRC meetings to update, discuss, and develop consensus. Conducted via GoToMeeting or similar videoconferencing, monthly.

Output: At least 12 PRC meetings.

Strategy: Use the Section Manager email list to communicate with SMs when necessary.

Output: Number of messages sent from PRC or ARRL PR Manager.

Outcome: SMs are current, informed, and involved.

OBJECTIVE: Provide continuing information and updates to PIOs so they stay current and motivated.

Strategy: Use webinars to educate and inform PIOs on specific aspects of amateur radio PR.

Output: At least two webinars per year; one on Field Day, one on PRC's choice (e.g. how to use video, what to expect in PR-101, social media for the ham, how to reach the maker community, how to present yourself to the media, how amateur radio can be used in STEM learning for youth, how a successful effort was done)

Output: Number of webinar viewers.

Strategy: Use the PR Reflector to speak directly to PICs and PIOs and, in some cases, media.

Output: Number of users on the PR Reflector (505 as of November 2012, including PIOs, volunteers, and media).

Output: Number of messages sent from PRC or ARRL PR Manager

Strategy: Use radio shows aimed at amateur radio operators.

Tactic: Seek mentions or segments on existing radio shows.

OBJECTIVE: Inform the public

Strategy: Ensure complete geographical coverage of ARRL service area by PICs

Output: Percent of service area under a PIC

Strategy: Use any and all appropriate methods to reach the public and the media.

Tactic: Use Facebook

Tactic: Develop a Facebook Badge program

Tactic: Use Twitter

Tactic: Use Website[s]

Output: Number of website hits per month

Output: Number of unique website users per month

Output: Number of Facebook followers

Output: Number of Twitter followers (1000 as of Winter 2012)

Output: Dollar value of PR as measured in Advertising Value Equivalents (AVE)

Relevant URLs for further information:

<http://www.arrl.org/how-arrl-s-pr-program-works>

<http://www.arrl.org/public-relations-committee>

<http://www.arrl.org/media-and-public-relations>

<http://www.arrl.org/sections>

<http://www.arrl.org/pio-pic-job-descriptions>

<http://www.arrl.org/public-service-announcements>

<http://www.arrl.org/video-psas> and <http://p1k.arrl.org/pub/pr/>

<http://www.arrl.org/campaign-1>

<http://www.arrl.org/hobby>

<http://www.arrl.org/emcomm-campaign>

<http://www.arrl.org/technical>

<http://www.arrl.org/current-contact-issue>

<http://www.arrl.org/pr-email-reflector>

<http://www.arrl.org/pr-courses>

<http://www.slideshare.net/guest1fefdef/ares-field-organization-for-emergency-communications>

<http://www.arrl.org/bill-leonard-award>

<http://www.arrl.org/phil-mcgan-award>

<http://www.arrl.org/news/search/Tag.name:public%20relations%20committee>

There are three main areas of Amateur Radio that draw people - and each has a specific set of promotional materials available:

The fun and fellowship of talking worldwide - "Hello" (www.hello-radio.org)

Emergency communications - "emergency radio, getting the message through" (www.emergency-radio.org)

Hands-on technology - "We Do That!" (www.WeDoThat-Radio.org)

RETIREMENT OF ALLEN PITTS W1AGP

The Committee wishes to recognize the dedication and contributions of Media and Public Relations Manager Allen Pitts, W1AGP. For more than eight years, Allen has been a creative source, motivational force, and untiring workhorse for this committee and for amateur radio. He has influenced or driven many of the committee's successes and inspired the continuing innovations in our work.

CONCLUSION

The Committee appreciates and thanks the Board for its continued efforts and support; the ARRL Staff for their tireless work; the Division and Section leaders for their critical activities; and the widespread family of ARRL members for all that they do for amateur radio.

Respectfully submitted,



Steven Polunsky, W5SMP, Chair
ARRL Public Relations Committee
Austin, Texas