

ARRL Program and Services Committee (PSC) Report to the Board – January 2017

ARRL Bylaw 39. The Programs and Services Committee shall: Guide development of service delivery mechanisms, evaluate services, and recommend program priorities; Advise Chief Executive Officer on services provided to individual members other than publications, including but not limited to contests and awards, information services including Logbook of the World and W1AW, and incoming and outgoing QSL bureau services; Advise Chief Executive Officer on volunteer programs, including but not limited to the field organization, affiliated clubs, volunteer examiners, Volunteer Counsel/Consulting Engineers, and educational initiatives; and Evaluate and recommend awards recipients to the Board for outstanding volunteer service or outstanding achievement.

PSC Committee members: Tom Abernethy W3TOM, Dwayne Allen WY7FD, Kent Olson KA0LDG, Doug Rehman K4AC, Art Zygielbaum K0AIZ, ARRL Field Services Manager Dave Patton NN1N and ARRL Radiosport Manager Norm Fusaro W3IZ (Staff Liaisons), and Jim Bohner N2ZZ (Chairman)

The Programs and Service Committee (PSC) is pleased to provide this report to highlight activities and accomplishments over the last six months.

The committee gathered formally at ARRL headquarters last July and via teleconference in November to conduct business and address a variety of topics. ARRL Assistant Secretary and PSC Secretary Dan Henderson N1ND provided much appreciated assistance as recording secretary to the committee.

DX Advisory Committee (DXAC): PSC tasked DXAC with researching the feasibility of a Mobile DXCC award. Their recommendations received in December 2015 were favorable, and Staff was tasked with determining needed resources, budget and schedule to roll out this award. The one-time non-endorsable mobile DXCC recognition award was approved at the July 2016 board meeting, minute 28. The PSC will be anticipating a progress report from Radiosport Manager Fusaro as to the progress and anticipated date of implementation. Although the DXAC has no current taskings, a number of DXCC issues are on the January PSC agenda, and future projects will be considered. Dwayne Allen WY7FD serves as the DXAC board liaison.

Contest Advisory Committee (CAC): The entire CAC report by Chairman George Wagner K5KG is included in your board books. In January 2016, PSC requested the CAC to undertake a study of Youth in radio contesting. This was to be carried out as a two part effort, to first conduct research and report findings, followed by analyzing the findings and making specific recommendations. A Youth in Radiosport Survey was begun in mid-April and completed on August 31, 2016. Recommendations have

been received from the CAC, completing phase I. We are now in phase II; the PSC will now begin its analysis of the CAC's findings, and plan recommendations based on those findings.

In May of 2016, PSC requested that the CAC undertake a project to consolidate "The General Rules of all ARRL Contests", the "General Rules for all ARRL contests Below 30 MHz" and individual contest rules into a single rule set for each of the ARRL HF Contests. Significant progress has been made in this effort.

A revision of the ARRL CAC handbook was undertaken by Director Rehman and expanded to cover all advisory committees. The revised document was approved by the PSC pending transcription, and the final copy will be evaluated at the January PSC meeting. Doug Rehman K4AC served as the CAC board liaison throughout 2016.

VHF and Above Contest Revitalization working group: Composed of Kermit Carlson W9XA (Chairman), Dave Patton NN1N (Staff liaison), Rod Blocksome KODAS, and Matt Holden K0BBC, PSC's VHF and Above Contest Revitalization working group continues its thorough review of ARRL's VHF and above contesting program and development of key recommendations to increase the level and breadth of participation in these contests. Recommendation was that a new format for the UHF contest be considered, entitled "The ARRL 222 MHz and Up Distance Contest", and rules for the new contest were provided with this recommendation. The PSC adopted the committee's report, and recommended implementation of this new contest, codified by the board at its July 2016 meeting, minute 31.

Mr. Janke (ARRL Contest Manager), Mr. Patton and Mr. Carlson have been consulted on several occasions for clarification to the rules for the new contest, but no changes have been required. Answers for the questions which require clarification will be handled through explanations in the upcoming QST article that introduces the new competition.

Members of the Committee continue to receive positive reviews about the decision to allow real-time spotting and scheduling during contests on the higher bands. This rule change has helped increase participation and interest in contesting on the bands of VHF and above.

The committee would especially like to thank outgoing members Doug Rehman K4AC and Marty Woll N6VI for their excellent work with the Committee.

DXCC Card Checking Program Modernization working group. Composed of Tom Abernethy W3TOM (Chairman), Dave Norris K5UZ, Dale Williams WA8EFK, and Dave Patton NN1N, PSC's DXCC Card Checking Program Modernization working group is conducting a top-to-bottom review of the League's card checking rules, procedures, etc. and has presented a preliminary report at the PSC's November web meeting. Comments and suggestions were entertained, and a final report aimed at modernizing and improving this important program is anticipated at the January PSC meeting.

Public Service Enhancement Working Group: Composed of Dale Williams WA8EFK (Chairman) Jim Pace K7CEX, Jim Tiemstra K6JAT, Steve Ewald, WV1X, Ken Bailey KI1U and Mike Corey, K1FUG, multiple issues are being evaluated. Alignment of ARES® with the operational structure of our partner agencies was evaluated, and found to be inconsistent with the structure of the National Incident Management System

(NIMS). Recommendation was that the Emergency Coordinator (EC) functions as the equivalent position of the NIMS Incident Commander during an activation. Elimination of the Official Emergency Station (OES) appointment was recommended, as all ARES members would serve that function. Lack of reporting by the EC's to ARRL HQ was evaluated, and attributed mainly to the lack of a simple electronic reporting process. Areas of the country who have developed their own reporting systems find substantially that EC's report on a regular basis. *(PSC Chair Note: Designing of a web based reporting system to gather information on activities performed by field volunteers has been on the PSC agenda for some time, approved by the board in January 2014, minute 43, but no definitive action has been found. This will be on the agenda for the January PSC meeting.)* The issue of ARES training was evaluated, and partner agencies are calling for all ARES operators to meet training standards, particularly those offered by FEMA. Concern was raised in regards to the need to revise and update our own training material (FSD 100 series). Bud Hippisley W2RU and Marcia Forde KW1U participated in the October teleconference. Both have had extensive experience with the National Traffic System™ (NTS™), and after just one teleconference, Bud offered a very thoughtful drawn three-page commentary that addressed most, if not all of the issues facing NTS. It is considered unfortunate that Bud's recent resignation from the NTS Eastern Area Chair position will reduce, if not end, his participation with the working group.

PSC Subcommittee on Education: Composed of Dr. David Woolweaver K5RAV (Chairman), Kermit Carlson W9XA, Bonnie Altus AB7ZQ, Debra Johnson K1DMJ, David Cockrum Ph.D. N5DO, Tommy Gober N5DUX, with consultants Austin Mongillo N1UIS and Matthew Shea AA1CT. Dr. Woolweaver reports that the subcommittee has been given three new tasks, which are all challenging and exciting. First, the committee will be charged with the updating and improvement of the existing power point programs that are used for Technician and General Class instruction; second, to examine and report on the status of the ARRL Teachers Institute on Wireless Technology; third, to examine and review the present arrangements that the ARRL has with AMSAT and the ARISS programs. The completion of these projects is slated for the end of 2017.

Volunteer Instructor Database: The Volunteer database requested by the Education Committee has been turned over to the Education Department and is currently in beta testing. Beta testing has resulted in a few improvements, and a final version is being completed at this time. During this process, discovery was made that the beta testing could not be made available outside of ARRL headquarters.

ARRL Award Recommendations: One award nominee for the 2016 ARRL International Humanitarian Award was sent for consideration by the committee from Steve Ewald WV1X, and will be addressed by the PSC on January 19th. Steve Ford has indicated that the winner of the Doug DeMaw W1FB Technical Excellence award for 2016 is the article: "Open Source Soft-Decision Decoder for the JT65 (63,12) Reed Solomon Code" by Stephen J. Franke, K9AN and Joseph H. Taylor, K1JT, published in the May/June issue of QEX. The Public Relations Committee has recommended nominees for the Bill Leonard, W2SKE, Professional Media Awards, which include print, audio and video. These nominees will be presented to the PSC for consideration.

National Traffic System™ (NTS™) issues: At the July 2016 board meeting, the board recognized the tireless efforts of the National Traffic System participants, thanking and congratulating them for their outstanding service (Minute 34). Also at that meeting, it was decided that the NTS area staff chairmen would, at least temporarily, be appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of the ARRL President, aligned and consistent with the manner by which all other voluntary ARRL chairmen and coordinators of regional or national scope are authorized (minute 33). The PSC had previously reached out to Bud Hippisley W2RU for his consideration of returning to the Eastern Area Chair. Our President Rick Roderick K5UR contacted Bud, and after discussion, Bud accepted the position. Bud has a distinguished resume of nearly a half century of service to the ARRL, being active in NTS and ARES since 1955. He has served as a Section Communication Manager (now referred to as Section Manager) of the Western New York Section and as a Vice Director of the Atlantic Division. He was uniquely qualified for that position. Rick then reached out to the current Central and Pacific Area Chairs and asked them to continue in their leadership positions. They elected not to do so, and no other candidates at this time have come forth. Citing a number of reasons, Bud resigned his position in mid-November, and was thanked for his excellent service to the ARRL during these difficult times. The ARRL continues to encourage experienced NTS participants to apply for these three leadership positions. Looking forward, the PSC, as well as the entire board, is anxiously awaiting the unveiling of the Second Century Communications plan, which has been developed in partnership between ARRL Headquarters staff and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It is hoped that those communication professionals within NTS that desire to do so will have a place within the plan to participate.

Section Manager Training/Workshops: The PSC was requested to review the curriculum for the annual Section Manager Workshops. Workshop agendas from 2015 and 2016 were reviewed, and were considered comprehensive. Feedback from the 2016 workshop by the Section Manager attendees was very favorable. The PSC thanked Mr. Patton NN1N and Steve Ewald WV1X for providing the information to the PSC and their continued work with the SM workshops. This topic is now considered closed.

DXCC Honor Roll Certificate: By consensus, the Committee directed the Field Services and Radiosport (FSR) Department to prepare a plan to develop a DXCC Honor Roll certificate, including the determination of needed resources, budget and schedule to roll out this award. Development of an additional certificate, the DXCC #1 Honor Roll, was suggested by the FSR department. The PSC agreed, and introduced this motion to the board at their July 2016 meeting. The motion was adopted, minute 30. The PSC will be anticipating a progress report from Radiosport Manager Fusaro as to the progress and anticipated date of implementation.

Amateur Auxiliary Program: The PSC stands ready to provide a representative to the Official Observer Study Committee headed by Vice President Brian Milesosky N5ZGT, per future appointment by President Rick Roderick K5UR.

As Chairman, I would like to thank all of the PSC members, the working groups, our League's advisory committees, and ARRL's staff for the dedication and energy they have poured in to our many deliberations, research of solutions and decision-making. I would especially like to thank my

predecessor, Second Vice President Brian Milesosky N5ZGT for his continued advice and counsel throughout my tenure as PSC chair.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Bohner N2ZZ
Chairman, ARRL Programs and Services Committee
ARRL Director, Roanoke Division