

**ARRL Public Relations Committee
Report to the Board of Directors
July 2020**

The 2020 PRC Committee Members

Committee Chairman, Sid Caesar, NH7C
Angel Santana, WP3GW
Andy Milluzzi, KK4LWR
Ed Efcak, WX2R
Scott Roberts, KK4ECR
John Bloodgood, KD0SFY
Gordon Mooneyhan, W4EGM
ARRL Headquarters Co-Liaison Carla Pereira, KC1HSX
ARRL Headquarters Co-Liaison Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R
ARRL Board Liaison, Bill Morine, N2COP
RAC representative, Alan Griffin

Mission, Purpose, and Scope

The Public Relations Committee's (PRC) mission is to ensure the ARRL's public relations practices and techniques are effective in presenting Amateur Radio and the ARRL through social and traditional media to amateurs, served agencies, regulators, policymakers and the general public.

The committee's purpose is to advise the Board of Directors via the committee's Board Liaison on policy regarding public relations strategy, allocation of resources to public relations, and the structure of public relations activities.

In addition, the committee coordinates and collaborates with the ARRL Communications Manager to define, guide, and review public relations components. The committee's scope includes media and messaging techniques, resources allocated to PR, policy governing PR activities and components, and evaluation of PR activities. The committee is not responsible for the creation or implementation of specific PR components.

Activities Report

The PRC has started the year in exciting fashion, following the goals and objectives set out by the PRC Chairman, advancing the engagement and empowerment of the field force of Public Information Officers (PIOs) and Public Information Coordinators (PICs) throughout the ARRL, raising awareness of public relations and public information throughout the Amateur Radio community.

In addition to the continued focused attention on the needs of the ARRL PIO/PIC field force, the PRC has expanded its outreach to include ARRL Section Managers and their Field Services teams. The PRC continues to refine its goals to increase cooperation, collaboration, and participation between the PRC, the PIOs/PICs, and the ARRL Sections and Divisions, while enhancing the tools and resources available for PIOs and PICs to serve their ARRL Section and the members of the ARRL.

PRC Strategic Plan Development Update

During this reporting period, the PRC has tested some initial aspects of the PRC Strategic Plan. The PRC has made great progress in the revitalization of the PIO/PIC field force, selection of high-profile Amateur Radio related events to promote in 2020, and specialty focused PIO/PIC related social media outreach and education. The development of the multi-year PRC Strategic Plan will provide the framework of the duties, responsibilities, and deliverables of the PRC, to better shape public relations communications goals and objectives within the ARRL. After completion, the PRC Strategic Plan will allow PIOs/PICs to have a resource that fully describes the necessary knowledge of the public relations/public information goals and objectives of the organization.

Field PIO/PIC Outreach – 2020 Field Day

For 2020, the PRC decided to enhance its outreach to PIOs and PICs for the 2020 ARRL Field Day, building on the successful Field Day outreach from 2019. PRC activity levels during this reporting period has risen considerably, both within the PRC itself and within the PIO/PIC field force. Participation levels of the PIOs and PICs, at both the national and field levels have shown a marked increase over last year's successes. Areas identified for improvement from 2019 to 2020 included PRC operated teleconference call participation, continuing education, and PIO/PIC participation with ARRL Section leadership. For the first time, the PRC expanded PR training to include Section Managers, the position which appoints PICs and PIOs. As a result of Section Managers receiving a new appreciation for the responsibilities of PICs and PIOs, many older appointments who were no longer performing their expected duties were relieved, and a new crop of appointments trained. We are encouraged with the enthusiasm and commitment of this new corps, as well as newfound support from Section Managers. Not only does this education from the PRC to the field need to continue, but Section Managers need to embrace that public outreach is critical to the benefit of their constituents. The PRC was able to realize a steady increase of Section Manager participation in PRC activities this reporting period, due to the assistance and collaboration with Steve Ewald, WV1X, Field Organization Supervisor.

The PRC hosted a series of Field Day video conference calls to bring the PIO/PIC community together to support the ARRL Field Day promotional efforts. The PRC video teleconference calls held in May 2020, were staggered by date and time to allow for interested PIOs and PICs to join the members of the PRC to discuss Field Day best practices, lessons learned, and discuss answers to questions from the field. Special attention was given to all of the new PIOs/PICs, as

the PRC provided a consistent baseline of information to be sure that they had a successful 2020 Field Day Public Relations campaign within their Section.

The PRC hosted a national PIC specific series of teleconference calls to focus on the PIC member volunteers, assess activity levels, and assure open communication pathways. The PRC was invited to other teleconference calls in support of PIOs/PICs for the 2020 Field Day, sharing the outreach activities of the PRC.

Other highlights of the 2020 Field Day focus by the PRC was outreach to influential Amateur Radio operators and the English to Spanish translation of Field Day messaging and Field Day documents. The PRC was able to garner support from the FCC Chairman Ajit Pai and his almost 80,000 social media followers, while former FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate, KK4INZ, also engaged his 13,000 social media followers, in the form of social media posts on Twitter. Craig Fugate also was active on Field Day from his Florida QTH, by both operating on the air and continuing his posts on social media.

During Field Day, the PRC operated a Field Day specific ARRL PRC Virtual Joint Information Center (VJIC) activation. The ARRL VJIC was hosted on the ARRL PRC Video Conference system, that allows both video and telephone audio connections. The specific goals of the Field Day activation included Public Relations/Public Information (PR/PI) "Reach Back" assistance and support to PIOs, PICs, and the Sections; sharing of Field Day related information, including situational awareness, media hits, and live events; collection of Amateur Radio PR/PI related activities that are of interest to the ARRL and its members; and practicing the Joint Information System (JIS).

2020 World Amateur Radio Day

The PRC was active in the promotion of the 2020 World Amateur Radio Day in April 2020. The PRC also provided English to Spanish translations of World Radio Day documents.

The publicity efforts surrounding the 2020 World Amateur Radio Day by the PRC was the first of the high-profile events on the 2020 Amateur Radio schedule that the PRC is promoting to increase outreach and awareness to PIOs and PICs. Future events for the PRC in 2020 include SKYWARN Recognition Day, National STEM Day, and FEMA's Emergency Preparedness Month.

McGan and Leonard Awards Update

The COVID-19 Pandemic has slowed the processes around awarding of the 2020 Bill Leonard W2SKE Professional Media Award. An update on this situation will be provided in the next PRC report.

Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, The PRC extended the deadline for the submission of nominations for the Philip J. McGan Memorial Silver Antenna Award to mid-June 2020. On July

1, the Public Relations Committee (PRC) held its monthly meeting, during which the members reviewed the two nominations which were submitted for this year's McGan Award. One entry was for a PIO who hosts a YouTube channel on Ham Radio topics. While the quality and content were quite high, PRC members voted to move his nomination to the Leonard Award category because the nominee derives compensation through subscription to his YouTube channel. Remuneration is explicitly prohibited under the posted rules for McGan Award eligibility. The other submission was deemed not to meet criteria because the nominee is not a PIO, and made a one-time media appearance which, while admirable, did not represent a continuous body of work on behalf of Amateur Radio.

Therefore, the PRC will not be forwarding a recommendation to the PSC for a resolution for this year's McGan Award.

Over the last two years, the PRC had been discussing ideas to reinvigorate the promotion of these two important awards, formulating plans to keep these awards alive and relevant. Despite the increased outreach by the PRC in 2019 and 2020, there still seems to be a lack of interest by PIOs and PICs regarding the McGan and Leonard awards. In the next reporting period, the PRC Chairman will establish a McGan and Leonard Awards PRC subcommittee to reevaluate the awards, assess improvements, and recommend enhancements to these awards. The PRC Chairman will first look towards previous McGan and Leonard award recipients to request their assistance with the new subcommittee.

Board and SM Social Media Guides Update

In 2018, the PRC Board Liaison, requested that the PRC develop a short written "primer" regarding the operation, monitoring, and posting guidelines for social media accounts. The Social Media Guide was developed and made available to ARRL leadership in 2019.

ARRL Headquarters team member Michelle Patnode, W3MVP, the ARRL Communications Content Producer, has updated the Social Media Guide for 2020 (attached to this report). This document is expected to be updated regularly, to include the latest information to assist ARRL Section and Division leadership.

The PRC feels that a coordinated social media strategy is essential for the ARRL and the ARRL membership. The PRC continues to strive to identify opportunities to assist the whole of the ARRL to realize the full potential of social media and its connection to goals of the ARRL, especially in reaching younger demographics.

PR-101 Update

The draft PR-101 has entered the last phase of editing. The PRC is assembling additional material for the social media section of the course, to better address the ever-changing social media environment. The PRC is in the process of locating and procuring pictures, logos, and other artwork to be added to the final PR-101 course.

The PRC still plans to add the updated PR-101 course into the new ARRL Lifelong Learning platform, once it is available, later in 2020. By being on this platform, instead of being a stand alone documents, as it has been in the past, the content of the training guide can be adapted swiftly to the increasingly rapid changes of social media.

Transitions

With the departure of David Isgur, N1RSN, the ARRL Communications Manager, the PRC Chairman corresponded with Interim Chief Executive Officer, Barry Shelley, N1VXY, to secure a clear and resilient relationship between ARRL Headquarters and the PRC. After internal discussions, CEO Shelly assigned PRC liaison duties to Carla Pereira, KC1HSX, and Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R, until a successor is named to fill the opening.

It is without question, that Carla and Bob were instrumental in the success of the PRC in this reporting period. The PRC is extremely appreciative of the countless hours that Carla and Bob spent assisting the PRC, the PRC Board Liaison, and the PRC Chairman.

The Future

Finally, the PRC recognizes that the incoming CEO will shape the future of external communications outreach on behalf of ARRL. Members of the PRC urge the new administration to devote the resources to construct a vibrant and sustainable outreach program. The ease of universal access to commercial communications has diminished the exposure of the American public to Amateur Radio. Our members enjoy a wide swath of spectrum, much of which is coveted by commercial entities, yet licensed operators make up just 0.2% of the American population. In order to not only make the public aware of Amateur Radio, but to strive to engage the public to understand our hobby's many societal benefits, especially its tax free volunteer donations of public service, the PRC strongly recommends the start of a new era of robust outreach and promotion.

In Closing

2020 has been a challenging year. The PRC is looking forward to finishing the year with the same energy and excitement as we started with, looking forward to a rewarding 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Sid Caesar – NH7C
ARRL Public Relations Committee Chairman