

**ARRL Board of Directors
Second Meeting
July 2004
Report of the Media Relations Manager**

It was a busy six months in the media relations department, particularly when it came to working with the media on the BPL issue. In late 2003, staff began assisting reporters with BPL articles, and responding (along with members) to stories touting the benefits of BPL technology. By early 2004 and in the months that followed, word of our interference concerns had spread, and the media relations effort increased substantially.

Over the past six months, coverage of the detrimental effects of BPL to the Amateur Radio Service has appeared in national and local media outlets of all types throughout the country, including trade and industry publications. The list is impressive. Some of the outlets include *The Wall Street Journal*, the Associated Press, *USA Today*, *The Seattle Times*, CBS Radio Network, *The Christian Science Monitor*, National Public Radio, Voice of America, *PC World* magazine, United Press International news wire and *The Washington (DC) Times*.

Thanks must be given to Jim Haynie, Dave Sumner, and Paul Rinaldo, who made themselves available for interviews and letter writing, when necessary. Ed Hare has been a constant source of technical help and advice. In addition, many ARRL members in BPL neighborhoods helped us put our best foot forward by doing local interviews, writing letters in response to stories and by keeping on top of the issue in their communities.

As mentioned in the Public Relations Committee report, Rich Moseson, W2VU, wrote a sample letter to the editor and talking points on the BPL issue. Several PR volunteers have used Rich's contributions, and report that they've been very helpful for them in dealing with local press contacts.

BPL is sure to be an ongoing public relations issue that will require vigilance and further work with the media. For the most part, our strategy has been to respond to stories in which the interference issue has not been addressed, and provide comment and information when reporters call. Switching to a more proactive strategy would be appropriate under certain conditions, and Jennifer has met with Dave Sumner to discuss the BPL media plan, which could evolve over time.

Another subject that attracted quite a bit of media attention was the addition of the "@" symbol to the Morse code. The story was covered by the *Baltimore Sun*, the Associated Press, National Public Radio, *The New York Times* and the Voice of America.

As always, Amateur Radio continued to gain a great deal of media coverage throughout the country so far this year. Emergency communications was covered by *EMS Magazine*, news of ARRL's restructuring proposal appeared in *The Oregonian* and *The New York Times* recently ran a piece on antennas. As always, ARRL staffers with expertise in a particular facet of Amateur

Radio have contributed to stories by making themselves available for interviews, often on short notice. Their help is always appreciated.

ARRL's 90th Anniversary provided an extra publicity opportunity this year. Jennifer distributed a national media release in May. The release garnered a few hits, most notably a segment on the CNN Radio Network out of Atlanta. A special section titled "PR Tips and Tools," was added to the PR pages to assist individuals and ARRL affiliated clubs with local promotion. Those who submit their 90th Anniversary media hits at any time during the year will receive a certificate of recognition. None have arrived at HQ thus far, but local groups have noted the 90th Anniversary theme in promoting their local ham radio events.

National news releases on Field Day and BPL were issued so far this year -- the BPL release in response to President Bush's comments in favor of BPL technology. Fill-in-the-blank releases for Kid's Day and Exam Day were posted to the PR pages and used in the monthly on-line newsletter *Contact!* Resources to help our field volunteers promote Field Day/Amateur Radio Week on the local level also were posted to the PR pages. Board election and SM election hometowners were written and distributed to local media outlets.

Jennifer finished off a new project -- ARRL Bios for ARRL Officers and staff members who travel and speak on behalf of the League. Bios and photos were added to the PR pages in January, and the bio section may be expanded to include Directors and Vice Directors, based on the level of interest.

The 2003 Annual Report project went very smoothly this year, and was completed on schedule. *Contact!* was written and posted to the PR pages on a monthly basis.

Over the past several years, Jennifer has been working more closely with the Public Relations Committee in her role as Staff Liaison. The committee for 2004 was in place by late January, and four new members joined the group this year. Early in the year, Jennifer developed a timeline for PRC projects, including directives outlined by the Programs and Services Committee at it's January meeting. Document 29 provides a detailed report of PRC achievements for the first half of 2004.

In other PR department news:

- Members of the Public Relations Committee have selected a winner for the 2004 Philip J. McGan Memorial Silver Antenna Award, and the recommendation will be presented to the Programs and Services Committee just prior to the Board Meeting.
- Jennifer represented ARRL at the Mississippi State Convention in February and attended the Dayton Hamvention in May.
- The 2003 Bill Leonard W2SKE Professional Media Award was presented early in the year to Sari Krieger, staff writer for Virginia's *Manassas Journal Messenger* and the *Potomac News*. Sari's winning entry covered the BPL issue, and she has reported on our interference concerns since, both in the newspaper and during a radio interview on the topic.

- As noted in the Public Relations Committee report to the Board, the PR reflector remains a popular tool for volunteers in the field. In the last six months, we've added 30 new members to the list, bringing the current membership to 300.
- Thanks to the efforts of Lisa Kustosik, the Bacon's clip reports are being sent out to Directors and members of the Public Relations Committee each month.
- Jennifer continues to write the "Media Hits" section of "Happenings" each month in *QST*, and read weekly for ARRL Audio News.

Looking ahead, plans will be made to launch a story, at the appropriate time, about the anticipated FCC proposal with regard to license restructuring and Morse code.

If anyone has any questions about this report, or the PR program in general, I'd be happy to discuss them with you.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Hagy, N1TDY
Media Relations Manager