

**ARRL Board of Directors
Annual Meeting
January 2005**

Doc. #26

Report of the Public Relations Committee

The second half of 2004 has been an active one for the PRC. Since the last report to the Board in July 2004 the group kept in touch via monthly conference calls and a special reflector. PR and Media Relations staff at Headquarters changed in mid year. Jennifer Hagy, N1TDY relocated to Massachusetts in August and Allen Pitts, W1AGP joined the staff in September.

Public Relations Grassroots Outreach

All members conduct PR work in their home sections and Jeff AA6JR, Sherri W4STB, and Diane K2DO have spoken about PR at local clubs. Bob, WA3PZO spoke on the topic "Field Day is not enough" (Emcomm training and PR) - EPA Emergency Communications Conference, Holmesburg Amateur Radio Club (Philadelphia.) and at several informal meetings on the topic of BPL and possible effects on ham radio and the medical industry. Bob, WA3PZO has also been interviewed on Amateur Radio Newline and the RAIN Report several times.

PR volunteers at all levels of the organization continue to share press releases, media hits, ideas, and assistance on the PR reflector as part of the Grass Roots Initiative. Rich, W2VU mentored a new PIO who posted a news release that needed much revision, to the reflector. They worked together offline on several releases and the new PIO went to the library and obtained additional study information. This scenario probably happens more often and it is indicative of the value of the reflector.

PRC members provide input/advise on PR Reflector, ARRL Prez reflector, and several other reflectors as PR questions come up.

Work on Programs and Services Committee Directives

In 2003 the League's Volunteer Resources Committee, now the Public Services Committee (PSC) recommended a segment on PR at the SM Workshop. Sherri, W4STB contributed a revision of the PR segment for the 2004 SM workshop. The new material included helpful ideas on how to find a good PIC and PIOs and how to use tools available to SMs for internal PR. One of the items about internal PR to newly licensed hams was sent to all SMs in late Jan. with the monthly mailing labels. Outreach to the SMs about PR efforts, the Speakers Bureau, and PR ideas is ongoing by Sherri's postings to the SM reflectors.

The PRC is working on several projects to assist the SMs, PICs and PIOs. These projects include the Speakers Bureau, training ideas for PIOs, the revision of the PIC and PIO welcome letter and info sheet. Chapters on dealing with bad press, Internet media, and crisis communications are being written for the PIC/PIO Handbook. The targeted completion of July 2004 for the Handbook chapters was not met and work by several of the committee members continues.

The Speakers Bureau Project

The largest project the committee has been working on this year is the Speakers Bureau, based on the PSC recommendations.

Since most sections need to start a speakers bureau (or rejuvenate an existing one) the committee accepted several sections as volunteers for a pilot of the project. Sections participating are SFL, SD, LA, NV, CO, EMA. Materials sent to these sections in late June include how to start a bureau, how to find speakers and promote their availability, how to locate groups needing speakers, helpful web sites, and public speaking tips. Also included were talking points for speakers to use when writing their speeches. The talking points are geared to target audiences such as kids, scouts, civic groups, outdoor enthusiasts, and public officials.

An interim report on the pilot, from the SMs and PICs to the PRC, was scheduled for the fall of this year, however the chairman's home was hit by two hurricanes in September. Incorporation of suggestions and improvements will be made and a report on the pilot will be given to the BOD in 06/05. A short summary of the pilot activities during the second half of 2004 has been presented to the PSC. Targeted opening of the program to all sections remains early 2005.

While the six sections are testing the materials for the Speakers Bureau the PRC is writing a boilerplate presentation to explain Amateur Radio to non-ham audiences. The talking points geared for specific groups, local interest comments and the speaker's own style could be added to the boilerplate. When completed this will be placed in the area titled "Public Speaking" on the Public Relations page of the ARRL website.

To promote the Speakers Bureau project during the test period we plan a Web news item, a QST article, outreach to SMs, ACCs, and PICs via e-mail and promotion at all hamfest PR and ARRL forums. Sherri, W4STB has posted, and will continue to post, messages on the SM reflectors and the PR Reflector about internal and external Speakers Bureaus. Sherri, W4STB has written an article about the Speakers Bureau for "Contact" and it appeared in the January 2005 issue.

Members of the PRC for 2004:

Sherri Brower, W4STB – Chairman, Southern FL SM

Jeff Reinhardt, AA6JR

Diane Ortiz, K2DO

Rich Moseson, W2VU

Jim McDonald, KB9LEI

Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO

Bill Morine, N2COP

Tim Lewallen, KD5ING

Bob Weinstock, W3RQ

Tony Zona, WB3KGT

Board of Directors Liaison was Tuck Miller, NZ6T until December 2004.

Current Board of Directors Liaison is Henry Leggette, WD4Q

Individual members contributed the following projects since July 2004:

Bob, WA3PZO wrote an article on amateur radio and the hurricanes for 9-1-1 Magazine (Jan 2005 issue). He is writing an article on amateur radio and the tsunami disaster for 9-1-1 magazine (March 2005 issue). He has received many requests for copies of my CQ Public Service/Emergency Communications articles to promote ham radio to government and served agencies.

Rich W2VU, Sherri W4STB, Diane K2DO, Tim KD5ING, Tony WB3KGT, Bill, N2COP, Bob WA3PZO, Jim KB9LEI, Jeff AA6JR and Jennifer Hagy N1TDY all contributed segments of the Speakers Bureau material.

Bill, N2COP continues to work with Gary Pearce, KN4AQ covering BPL issues in NC. As Managing Director of CARES (Carolinas Amateur Radio Emergency Services) he worked with 15 coastal hospitals in North and South Carolina to provide dedicated public health emergency communications. He also serves on the staff of K2BSA at the quadrennial Boy Scout National Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia, to be held July 23rd to August 5th this year. He is working to garner national coverage for K2BSA's operations before and during Jamboree where 50,000 visitors are expected.

Rich, W2VU and Sherri, W4STB held a PR forum at the Huntsville Hamfest in August. They were joined by Alabama ASM Rebekah Dorff, AG4Y as a presenter.

Sherri, W4STB joined the Winlink 2000 group, Vice Director Dick Mondro, W8FQT and HQ staffer Dan Miller, K3UFG for presentations and an ARRL table at the Seven Seas Cruising Association Annual meeting in Melbourne Fl. This group's members are boaters and RVers.

Bob Weinstock, W3RQ, letter to editor of TIME magazine regarding ham radio being "a faintly embarrassing hobby."

Jeff, AA6JR arranged a display at a local library commemorating ARRL's 90th anniversary.

Other Projects

The committee has judged and recommended to the BOD a recipient of the Leonard Award.

During the year the PRC continued to look at ways to motivate and assist clubs to do year-round PR efforts because the committee members believe that Field Day is not enough. The PRC will work with Norm Fusaro, W3IZ to get the word about PR to the affiliated clubs and to explore ways to assist the PIC and ACC in working together.

The hurricanes of August and September provided many local area media hits and some national press mention. The earthquake and tsunami disaster in Southern Asia continues to provide Amateur Radio stories. Some criticism was made that press coverage at the national and the local level was slow or lacking in magnitude. This issue was discussed on several reflectors, some non-ARRL affiliated. Amateur radio is not the "big story" of natural disasters. The committee is working on adding information to PIO training to assist in this area. One suggestion that will be incorporated is the pairing of PIOs with someone outside of the disaster area that has access to Internet and phones. To introduce this idea Jim McDonald, KB9LEI wrote an article for CONTACT about back-up procedures for PIOs/PICs to consider.

2005 and Beyond

Sherri, W4STB will continue outreach to the SMs via reflectors. Articles about the Speakers Bureau for QST and the web site will be done later in the year.

Plans are underway for the Dayton PR Forum. This forum will focus on PR issues relating to BPL. The Committee asks that all members of the Board of Directors attend the forum and promote this and all ARRL National Convention forums in their Divisions.

Work will continue on revisions to the PIO handbook, training for PICs and PIOs, the Speakers Bureau, and ways to get members involved in a grassroots legislative lobbying effort.

Members of the PRC are concerned that the ARRL public relations program does not have funding or manpower necessary to provide the level of exposure for Amateur Radio that many members are asking for. The committee members are volunteers and all are employed full time. Headquarters staff is one person. These are difficult financial times for the ARRL. We believe an investment in the public relations program would yield tools for the field appointees which in turn would mean more ARRL members and more awareness of Amateur Radio by the media and the served agencies. The Board of Directors can assist in several ways: One, a hard look at the next budget and Two, promotion of the public relations program at the Division level by encouraging PR forums at conventions and assisting the sections with PR training for the appointees.

Special thanks go to:

Jennifer Hagy, N1TDY for her support and long hours of assistance.

David Sumner, K1ZZ and Lisa Kustosik for their assistance in making the staff transition easier.

Allen Pitts, W1AGP for support, assistance and for jumping right in and working with us.

Respectfully submitted,
Sherri Brower, W4STB
Public Relations Committee Chairman