

ARRL Ad-hoc Committee on Scouting Report to the Board – January 18, 2008

ARRL ad-hoc Committee on Scouting charge: To study the interface between ARRL and scouting organizations and make recommendations for improvement, and survey ARRL and scouting literature for effectiveness and adequacy.

Members: Brian Milesosky N5ZGT, Bill Edgar N3LLR, Jim Fenstermaker K9JF, Larry Wolfgang WR1B

Ham radio and scouting form a near-perfect marriage, per se. As the general ham population continues to age, there is an urgent need to involve younger, enthusiastic people to its ranks to secure a healthy future. Likewise, as the scouting community remains active in such activities as backpacking, camping, and public service, ham radio serves as a great resource to provide not only a measure of safety, but an additional element of excitement. Simply put, the scouting community can benefit the ham community, and certainly vice-versa. Members of the scouting community are active in their communities and the field, and generally excited to try new activities due in part to merit badges and rank advancement. As such, scouts (youth) and scouters (adult volunteers) are a prime audience to target when promoting our wonderful hobby.

Since 2005 the ad-hoc Committee on Scouting has been engaged with reviewing various topics per our charge including ARRL and scouting literature as well as the interface between ARRL and scouting organizations. This review has benefited from the involvement of certain individuals serving the committee in an adjunct manner: Bill Morine N2COP, Frank Krizan KR1ZAN, Mark Abramowicz NT3V, John Pise KX1X, Ray Moyer WD8JKV, Doug Asher KK5DUG, and Nathaniel Frissell W2NAF. We thank them for their assistance.

To date the committee has focused on the Boy Scouts of America, and efforts will turn to Girl Scout community in the near future.

We are pleased to offer our recommendations stemming from this extensive review, which are presented in the following pages. We expect that some degree of consultation or assistance will be needed to implement any or all of them, particularly in the areas of literature and web content, and we are happy to do so.

In two years the Boy Scouts of America will celebrate its 100th anniversary, and there is much that ARRL and BSA could do together to forge a strong alliance for the second century of Scouting and amateur radio.

Respectfully submitted,

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Recommendation #1:

For ARRL, the national association of amateur radio, to pursue and engage in a formal relationship with the Boy Scouts of America commencing with a two-way memorandum of understanding.

Discussion:

What can BSA gain from ARRL in a relationship?

- ARRL could assume the role of contributing editor of the Radio Merit Badge booklet. This badge serves as an important vehicle for amateur radio to be introduced into the Boy Scout troop.
- ARRL could contribute to the content of the Electricity, Electronics and Emergency Communications merit badge books since each are directly applicable to amateur radio.
- ARRL could develop courses, lesson plans, etc. for teaching the Radio Merit Badge. Mark NT3V mentions that the material developed by K2BSA be used as a model.
- ARRL could contribute to personal communications and emergency communications planning that the Boy Scouts of America might partake in.
- ARRL could be a contributing editor to Boy's Life (BSA's equivalent to QST, intended for youth) and Scouting (BSA's equivalent to QST, intended for adults) magazines for articles relating to amateur radio and emergency communications.
- ARRL could provide support to K2BSA and Radio Merit Badge training at the BSA National Jamboree held every four years in Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia and attended by over 30,000 scouts and scouters.

What can ARRL gain from BSA in a relationship (tangible and non-tangible)?

- The Boy Scouts of America could recognize ARRL as the national association of amateur radio.
- The Boy Scouts of America would have an organization it can look to as an authoritative source for radio communications, especially assisting in emergency communications.
- The Boy Scouts of America would open the door to an incredible pool of potential new hams who can be tapped for hobby as well as emergency communications.
- The Boy Scouts of America and ARRL could use their mutual clout to become larger players on the national stage. BSA is looking – considering the evolving ethics and behavior in society – to maintain a stronger role in the community. ARRL is looking to do the same. By joining forces, the organizations can use their mutual resources to attract federal and state agencies, legislators, and community leaders in recognizing the resources they have in scouting and amateur radio.

Recommendation #2:

To redesign the current ARRL "Scouts on the Air" and "Scouting" promotional brochures, incorporating the following qualities to better promote ham radio to members of the scouting community:

OBJECTIVES:

To build excitement around ham radio in the scouting world
To inform scouts what they can do with ham radio

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Incorporate more telling and interesting photographs to the cover. Images should be larger and more descriptive of the excitement. Photo of scout (in uniform) interacting with the radio and assisting adult followed by a photo of a scout "bunny hunting" or "fox hunting" (but be sure to explain in the image caption what bunny/fox hunting is).
2. The tween (between pre-teen and teenager) and teen demographics are extremely web oriented and savvy and the brochure should reflect that. They are also much more in-tune with lifestyle and media-heavy marketing. While these elements are difficult to incorporate into a brochure, they **MUST** be reflected in the website. There should be highly engrossing images, video footage if possible. This could include a 30 second to 2 minute video focusing primarily on kids talking about ham radio, talking on the air (How cool would it be to have a 12 year old talking on video with someone from India or Australia!?). Adult presence should be minimal.
3. Use direct marketing points to encourage kids to take action: include the *direct* URL (i.e. <http://www.arrrl.org/scouts>). Don't put an e-mail address on the brochure; a URL is enough and most kids want to see something interesting and exciting before contacting someone. There can be an e-mail address on the website to connect scouts with someone to answer questions. Perhaps there should a contact for each ARRL division that scouts can reach out to find local hams from that particular area.
4. What is a ham? All jargon should be briefly and clearly explained.
5. Using a 4-color bleed in the printing of the brochure will increase the appeal to kids.
6. There should be less text, but text should be more direct and engrossing overall. Text should be heavily bulleted or numbered and maintain a sense of brevity.
7. Mention radio contests, fox hunting, PSK-31 and the other many activities involved with ham radio.

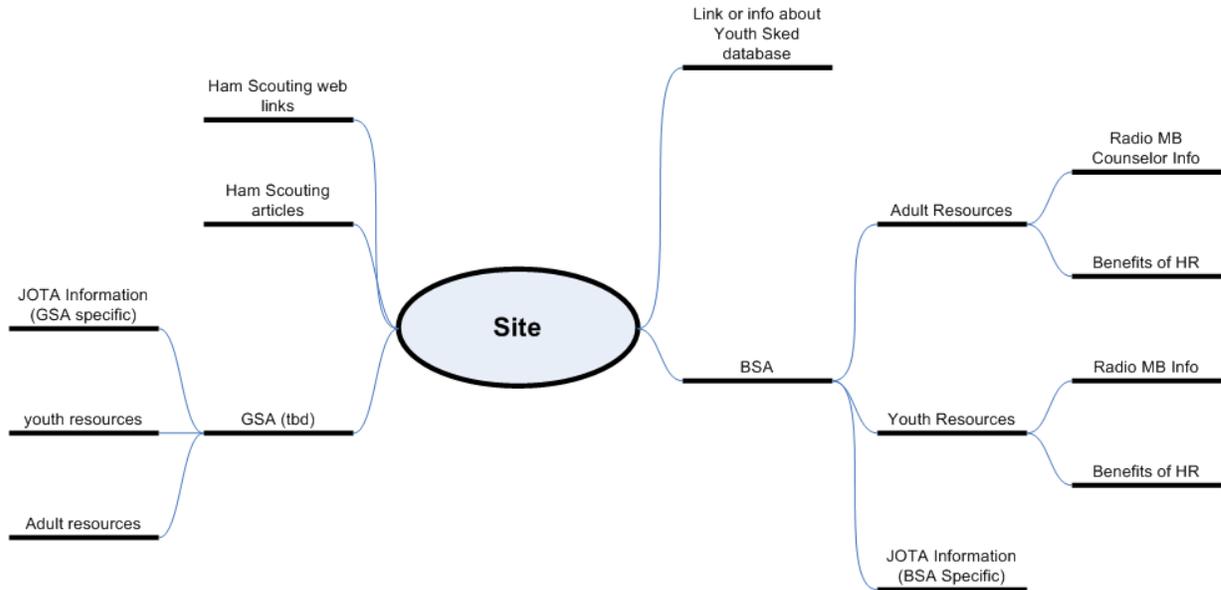
We would like to thank Andrew Fenstermaker, son of Director Fenstermaker, for his contribution above. Andrew has a Masters in Business Administration and a Bachelor in Communication from Washington State University, and works at 206, Inc., a non-traditional marketing agency, where he manages key elements of the Free Yr Radio partnership between Yaris and Urban Outfitters. He also runs a music review website called FensePost, managing a dozen contributing writers.

- Make a brochure specific to Boy Scouts of America and another brochure specific to Girl Scouts – both programs are very different and communicating to both via a single flyer is ineffective.
- Answer the question of "What's in it for me?"
- Don't put pictures of any ARRL publications on it – that only dates the brochure.

Recommendation #3:

To create an exclusive scouting section on the ARRL website. The purpose of this web content would be to provide scouts and scouters detailed information about ham radio as it relates to scouting, beyond what's offered by a brochure. It is stressed that this content target both youth and adults, be easily accessible to someone who visits the ARRL website, and be organized by theme (What scouts can do with ham radio at scouting events, Radio Merit badge, Girl Scout related content, resources for adults, etc.).

- The web section would be a general Scouting area, intended for Scouts only (i.e. not a general youth page that also includes scout content). Any other youth-related content would reside on a general youth section.
- Incorporate specific content for the Boy Scouts of America and specific content for the Girl Scouts of the USA.
- Incorporate specific content for scouts (youth) and specific content for scouters (adults)
- Provide links to the Technical Information Service (TIS) resource, youth skeds database, ARRL scholarships, etc.
- Incorporate Radio merit badge resources
- Incorporate Jamboree On the Air (JOTA) resources
- A video with scout aged hams talking about radio/communication.
- Repeated recommendation by Andrew Fenstermaker: The tween (between pre-teen and teenager) and teen demographics are extremely web oriented and savvy and the brochure should reflect that. They are also much more in-tune with lifestyle and media-heavy marketing. While these elements are difficult to incorporate into a brochure, they **MUST** be reflected in the website. There should be highly engrossing images, video footage if possible. This could include a 30 second to 2 minute video focusing primarily on kids talking about ham radio, talking on the air (How cool would it be to have a 12 year old talking on video with someone from India or Australia!?). Adult presence should be minimal.
- A similar video with an adult scouter addressing other adult scouters about the benefits and joys of ham radio in the pack, troop or crew.
- A sample block diagram for such a site is presented below for consideration:



Recommendation #4:

To further aid Boy Scouts of America with the promotion of Jamboree on the Air (JOTA) which occurs every October.

- While JOTA is an international event, ARRL could name a national JOTA coordinator to work closer with Boy Scouts of America.
- ARRL could aid BSA in promoting the event via an annual article in Boys Life or Scouting magazines, or perhaps via an ARRL-developed, BSA-funded flyer that would be distributed to the nation’s BSA councils to encourage JOTA participation.
- Retain JOTA stories (<http://www.arrl.org/scouts/jota/Stories>) for at least three years, allowing curious viewers - especially newcomers within BSA and/or amateur radio - to view past years' comments and derive ideas from them.

Recommendation #5:

To further aid K2BSA, the nation’s largest amateur radio promotional event (mode demonstrations, on-air contacts, licensing classes, Radio merit badge classes, and more to an audience of 20,000 youth and adults) held at the National Jamboree which occurs once every four years at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. The next Jamboree takes place in 2010, the 100th anniversary of Scouting in America.

- ARRL should continue to provide support to K2BSA and Radio Merit Badge Training at the National Jamboree through providing literature and an ARRL liaison (Larry Wolfgang).
- ARRL’s president should visit K2BSA at the national jamboree to represent ARRL and its support for the operation.
- Aid in the organization of an International Space Station (ISS) contact at the 2010 National Jamboree in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Scouting in America.

Other Recommendations

- Offering just a newly designed brochure and website would be insufficient. The next step would be to engage ARRL's membership and marketing departments to proactively target scouts and scouters via Boy Scouts of America, its councils, and especially via ARRL-affiliated clubs who might engage local scouting units to teach the Radio merit badge which might lead into a Technician licensing class, organize JOTA, etc.
- Create/appoint a Headquarters liaison to the Boy Scouts of America to maintain communications with BSA National on matters related to ham radio and scouting. This person should obviously be familiar with the scouting program, ideally a present/recent member of it.
- Approach the Boy Scouts of America to develop a 10 year giving plan for amateur radio through BSA. The goal would be to set up amateur radio stations in council summer camps throughout the United States and to seed amateur radio Venturing groups. This form of marketing will find a subset of several hundred people in the US who are both hams and current/former Boy Scouts or Scouters who would believe in giving to such an effort. BSA should not be threatened by this campaign, but rather see it as a new source of money, and the opportunity to develop a new program area that is a perfect fit to Scouting.
- Investigate, with BSA approval, an amateur radio presence at National Order of the Arrow Conferences (NOAC), which take place at major universities that likely have campus ham clubs and ham radio stations. A local club or campus club could spearhead the effort, and ARRL could provide promotional material to make it happen.
- Develop a downloadable video which could be shown at scout meetings to promote ham radio, similar to the Walter Cronkite video, but narrated by a young ham who is also a scout. This video could also include a segment narrated by an adult scouter for adults in the scout unit. Topics briefly presented might include scouts having fun on the radio in the field, the Radio merit badge, the safety element of ham radio while in the wilderness, Jamboree on the Air (JOTA), etc.