

**ARRL Public Relations Committee
Report to the Board of Directors
July 2019**

The 2019 PRC Committee Members

Committee Chairman, Sid Caesar, NH7C
Angel Santana, WP3GW
Andy Milluzzi, KK4LWR
Ed Efchak, WX2R
Scott Roberts, KK4ECR
John Bloodgood, KD0SFY
Gordon Mooneyhan, W4EGM
ARRL Communications Manager, David Isgur, N1RSN
ARRL Communications Content Producer, Michelle Patnode, W3MVP
Board Liaison, Bill Morine, N2COP
Board Representative, Joseph Tiritilli, N4ZUW
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 to amateurs, served agencies, 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 works 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 continued its progress toward the new set of goals and objectives set for the Committee, focusing on engaging and empowering Public Information Officers (PIOs) and

Public Information Coordinators (PICs) throughout the ARRL, to raise the visibility and awareness about the Amateur Radio community. In this reporting period, the PRC has put forth an ever-increasing amount of focused attention to the needs of the ARRL PIO/PIC cadre. These efforts are focused on the PRC goals to increase cooperation and collaboration between the PRC and the PIOs/PICs, 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 Continues

Chairman Caesar and the PRC continue their development of the multi-year plan that 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.

PRC Membership Update

During this reporting period, Chairman Caesar led the efforts to fill the open positions on the PRC. It was a major goal for the PRC to fill the open positions on the PRC, to properly address the PRC workload and allow for thorough adjudication for the selection of recommended candidates for the McGan and Leonard Awards, each year. The PRC utilized a more inclusive process to find energetic and talented members for the PRC. Utilizing notices via the PRC Reflector and other ARRL related communication pathways, including ARRL.org, the PRC requested nominations from the ARRL members to fill the open PRC positions.

The PRC received numerous self-nominations for the open PRC positions. To assure openness and transparency, each of the candidates were asked to submit a formal request for consideration, a resume, and supporting documentation for their request for consideration. Also, each of the candidates was required to participate in interviews with the PRC.

After the interviews were completed, the PRC forwarded the results to the ARRL President, through the PRC Board Liaison Bill Morine, N2COP. The ARRL President selected three of the candidates to fill the open positions on the Public Relations Committee. The three new PRC members are:

Scott Roberts, KK4ECR
John Bloodgood, KD0SFY
Gordon Mooneyhan, W4EGM

All three of the new members have already been making an impact on the PRC, bringing their experience and expertise to the PRC.

Field PIO/PIC Outreach Update

Two initiatives that we are continuing to make progress on include the efforts of ARRL Communications Manager David Isgur, N1RSN, ARRL Communications Content Producer, Michelle Patnode, W3MVP, and the PRC members with the revitalization of the monthly PIO/PIC newsletter “Contact.” Dave and Michelle have captured numerous stories and information to include in the future “Contact” monthly issues. This initiative is tied in with the efforts of ARRL HQ to create a more user-friendly and editor-friendly format for all of its email newsletters (such as the ARRL Letter, the ARES® E-Letter, and the ARRL Contest E-Letter). Unfortunately, this process has been slower than anticipated. In the meantime, the PR Reflector has been utilized to share pertinent information with the PIO/PIC cadre.

PRC member Ed Efchak, WX2R, has finished his efforts updating the PR-101 course. The draft PR-101 is now in review by the full PRC committee. The updated PR-101 course, which will be launched on the new ARRL Lifelong Learning platform, is expected to serve as the initiation of the PRC’s efforts to provide current and meaningful training to the PIOs and PICs. The PRC has identified a need for the PIOs/PICs to complete public relations and public information training, to increase the amount of field and headquarters level capability and understanding of the role of the PIOs/PICs. The PRC strives to increase in PIO/PIC activity levels to realize a clear improvement of greater engagement between PIOs/PICs with their SMs and SECs.

PRC 2019 Field Day Outreach to PIOs/PICs

As part of Chairman Caesar’s strategic outlook for the PRC outreach to PIOs/PICs in this reporting period, a series of conference calls relating to the 2019 Field day event were initiated in May 2019. These conference calls were developed and presented by the PRC on five different occasions throughout the month. The times of the calls were varied, giving all an opportunity to participate at a convenient time. Participants were able to join the conference call using an audio line or log into the conference call via internet video link. The PRC utilized donated time on a commercial video teleconference service for these Field Day outreach conference calls.

The 2019 Field Day Outreach and Discussion Conference Calls started on 9MAY19, concluding on 30MAY19. Each of the teleconferences were designed to be an opportunity for the participants to be interactive, rather than a lecture from the PRC. The covered topics included:

- 2019 Field Day PIO/PIC preparation and planning
- Press Releases
- Social Media
- Successful interaction with print, radio, and television professionals
- Available Field Day materials
- Field Day Public Relations “Best Practices” and “Lessons Learned”
- Open Forum

The PRC team had excellent participation on the Field Day conference calls, with each of the PRC members assisting Chairman Caesar with presentations, discussions, and Field Day related suggestions for the PIO/PIC participants.

This first of its kind outreach by the PRC was a great success. The PRC had more than 50 participants total on the Field Day Outreach conference calls. The PRC forecasts more participation as PIOs/PICs become more familiar with the types and amounts of outreach that the PRC has provided and will provide in the future. Plans are already underway by the PRC for the 2020 Field Day Outreach to PIOs and PICs. A PRC Field Day Outreach After Action conference call is scheduled to discuss additions and improvements, planning towards the future.

ARRL Public Relations Committee Virtual Joint Information Center - Midwest Tornadoes

During a large outbreak of tornadoes and severe weather in the Midwest in May of 2019, the PRC activated the ARRL PRC Virtual Joint Information Center (VJIC) to share information regarding the storms, Amateur Radio activity in support of the storm emergency response, and to coordinate with our internal ARRL partners in Emergency Preparedness and ARRL Leadership. Chairman Caesar and the PRC have adopted and implemented the VJIC to assure connections with ARRL Public Information Officers (PIO) and Public Information Coordinators (PIC) during disasters.

Knowing that assembling a PRC focused Joint Information Center (JIC) on the site of a disaster at the appropriate location may be impossible or expensive, a PRC VJIC serves the need for timely information gathering and dissemination in a response by collecting information from responders, PIOs, PICs, Section Managers, Section Emergency Coordinators and partner agencies across a wide area. The functionality of a physical JIC can be mimicked in a VJIC including development and dissemination of messages, collaborative discussions via email or threaded bulletin board chats. Media monitoring, internal messaging, rumor investigation and control capabilities, can also function at full capacity in this format. The PRC uses donated time on a GoTo Meeting platform video teleconference system to utilize voice and video interaction, chat boxes, email, and the sharing of PowerPoint presentations. This scalable process can be activated for smaller incidents or for larger responses. The PRC's VJIC model can also be a training ground to determine if qualified ARRL PIOs can work inside FEMA JICs during declared disasters.

Specifically, during this tornado VJIC activation, the Ohio Section shared pertinent weather, disaster response, and disaster recovery information with the VJIC, including information about the destruction of Hara Arena, the former home of the Dayton Hamvention. The Ohio Section Emergency Coordinator was the onsite support to the State of Ohio, located in the State of Ohio Emergency Operations Center providing situation reports and current disaster reports to the VJIC. This important information received by the VJIC was shared with ARRL Headquarters.

The VJIC was operated by the PRC team for 5 days.

McGan and Leonard Awards Update

During this reporting period, the PRC made its recommendation for the 2019 McGan Award, in recognition of outstanding efforts by an ARRL volunteer to promote awareness of Amateur Radio by the general public. PRC Board Liaison Bill Morine, N2COP, will present the PR Committee's recommendation at the July 2019 ARRL Board of Directors Meeting.

Each of the 2018 Leonard Awards for outstanding media coverage of Amateur Radio have been presented or delivered, as of the end of this reporting period.

Of special note, ARRL Southeastern Division Director Greg Sarratt, W4OZK, traveled to Atlanta in February to make a live, on-air presentation of the 2017 ARRL Bill Leonard W2SKE Professional Media Award for Video Reporting to The Weather Channel's Jim Cantore and Jen Carfagno. Cantore and Carfagno co-host The Weather Channel's morning *AMHQ: America's Morning Headquarters* program.

The 2017 Leonard award recognized the *AMHQ* co-hosts' September 2017 interview of then-ARRL Emergency Preparedness Manager Mike Corey, KI1U. Corey discussed ARRL's efforts to assist the American Red Cross in the response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. The February 2019 presentation included a clip of the Corey interview as well as an interview with Sarratt. Sarratt presented *AMHQ* co-hosts with a \$250 check as part of the award, which The Weather Channel donated to the American Red Cross.

Director Sarratt was given a quick tour of the studio and was given a detailed tour of the control room and learned how the shows are put together and produced. It's estimated that nearly a 250,000 people were watching The Weather Channel at the time of the presentation.

Board and SM Social Media Guides Update

Bill Morine, N2COP, 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 presented at the January 2019 ARRL Board of Directors meeting. The ARRL Communications Manager David Isgur, N1RSN, and Michelle Patnode, W3MVP, the ARRL Communications Content Producer, with assistance from the PRC members, will continue to update and improve the Social Media Guide.

We are grateful to serve the ARRL and its membership.

Respectfully submitted,

Sid Caesar – NH7C
ARRL Public Relations Committee Chairman