

In the first half of 2011, the Public Relations Committee encouraged ARRL staff and members to continue to take advantage of emerging technologies to advance promotion of Amateur Radio. For example, working across several departments, Public Relations was one of key entities in distributing information on encouraging members to write to their U.S. House representatives to oppose HR607's present provisions for auctioning off 420-440 MHz spectrum. As we now know, almost 10,000 letters from Hams have been sent to Congressional representatives regarding this legislation. The PRC and the Media & PR Dept. will work further with other ARRL departments to refine the success of this model for future legislative campaigns. Another example of new technology was the first time use at ARRL, championed by the Media & Public Relations Dept., of a Quick Response, or "QR", symbol. QR symbols permit smartphone users to scan the symbol, which then takes them to hyperlinks to websites. Below is ARRL's first QR symbol which took users to more information about Field Day at <http://www.arrl.org/field-day> We believe ARRL will find many other future applications for QR symbols.



The first months of 2011 also saw the successful *Now Hear This* audio webcast add video submissions. What began as an audio outlet on matters relating primarily to furthering media and public relations matters is evolving into a source of expertise on many facets of Amateur Radio with audio and now video capability which complements ARRL's traditional print outlets. The PRC is reaching out frequently to ARRL membership encouraging subject matter expert video submissions for consideration and posting. The long term goal is to build a library of audio and video segments on a variety of subjects which will be accessible on ARRL's website.

The PRC is championing the adoption of social media to advance Amateur Radio promotion. Newest PRC member Steven Polunsky, W5SMP, designed a PR campaign for Field Day using Twitter with the intent that a large number of "Tweets" nationwide at the start of Field Day may capture the interest of media and stimulate additional Field Day coverage. We will report later on the success of this campaign. It is clearly evident that Social Networking is not a fad, that it is steadily maturing into a mainstream component of media, and that ARRL needs to address use of Social Networking in its long term media and public relations planning.

The outbreak of severe weather and tornadoes in Alabama, Missouri, North Carolina and Massachusetts in April and May revealed numerous media opportunities – some captured but many missed. In the Joplin, Missouri tornadoes, Salvation Army's SATERN team not only filled a vital communications role, but SATERN's managers frequently updated COMMS status for all media. It proved to be a very successful model. Their role was featured on nearby KCTV-TV, Channel 5 in Kansas City, MO. This positive media highlight, however, was diminished by the inability of ARRL PICs and PIOs elsewhere to provide timely information about Amateur Radio EmCOMM activations. ARRL staff members were able to monitor firsthand with the June 1st Springfield, Massachusetts tornado just 30 miles from ARRL headquarters that PIOs were not in touch with ARES responders. This problem has been festering for several years, but became abundantly clear with the spring tornado outbreaks. To correct this, the PRC will pursue two avenues. First, the PRC will begin the design of an EmCOMM activation PIO reporting system in conjunction with ARRL Emergency Preparedness Manager Mike Corey, W5MPC. Secondly, we will work with the Emergency Communications Advisory Committee (ECAC) for ways to ensure that large disasters receiving national media attention have an Amateur Radio PIO presence. This should include a PIO component as part of the duties of the proposed MDEC, Major Disaster Emergency Coordinator. Finally, as part of the recommendation to strengthen timely PIO reporting, the PRC continues to urge that PR101 training be made mandatory for PIC appointments, encourages PIOs to take PR101 training to be effective, and applauds those Section Managers who have made PR101 training compulsory for PIOs in their sections.

To reflect better the ever changing media landscape and how best to utilize both traditional and emerging media, the PRC in 2010 revised the job descriptions of Public Information Coordinators (PICs) and Public Information Officers (PIOs), which were last updated in 2003. The revisions were made available for review by PIOs and PICs in mid 2010, and for a 60 day window by Section Managers in autumn 2010. Comments from these three groups were incorporated into the versions submitted to the Programs and Services Committee (PSC) for adoption. The PIO and PIC job descriptions have been available for review for over a year, and in the hands of the Program and Services Committee since late 2010. PRC members would like to see adoption of them soon.

Over the past year, PRC members have become increasingly concerned about the timeliness of presentations of the Bill Leonard W2SKE Professional Media Award to its recipients. The three awards – Audio, Video and Text – are the most visible and tangible signs to professional journalists about Amateur Radio. Its purpose today is the same as it was when the Leonard Award was introduced over 40 years ago – to recognize fair and balanced presentation of Amateur Radio to the general public by fulltime journalists. To entice more coverage of Amateur Radio by professional journalists, the Leonard Award was revamped in 2009 with changes recommended by an ad hoc committee consisting of major media working journalists and professors of journalism. In addition to expanding the Leonard Award to three categories and designating honoraria to go to a recognized charity of the recipient's choosing, the ad hoc committee emphasized that the management of the Leonard Award, including the recognition of its recipients, be timely

if the award is to retain credibility among professional journalists. Delays in bestowing the award to its recipients could result in the credibility of the award being undermined within the journalism community.

PRC members want to extend our appreciation to departing members Diana Eng, KC2UHB, and Walt Palmer, W4ALT, for their years of dedication, service and above all guidance in moving ARRL media and public relations forward. Joining us on the PRC this year are Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, an adjunct journalism professor at Temple University and fulltime reporter and anchor at KYW, Philadelphia's all news radio station, and Steven Polunsky, W5SMP, a Texas state legislative assistant and STX section PIO. An ongoing participant in monthly PRC calls is a liaison from the Radio Association of Canada (RAC), a role currently filled by Norm Rashleigh, VE3LC. The other members of the PRC are Nevada SEC and fulltime radio personality Don Carlson, KQ6FM, and Oklahoma Section Manager and television news videographer Kevin O'Dell, N0IRW. Serving as liaison to the PRC is Roanoke Division Vice Director Dr. Jim Boehner, N2ZZ. ALL PRC members remain exceptionally grateful to ARRL Media & Public Relations Manager Allen Pitts, W1AGP, for his steadfast dedication and perseverance in advancing the cause of Amateur Radio. On a personal note, I am grateful to all current and former PRC members for their many hours of support and numerous contributions.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Morine – N2COP

Public Relations Committee Chairman