

**Contest Advisory Committee
Semi-Annual Report**

**For the American Radio Relay League
Board of Director's Meeting**

January, 2016

**George Wagner, K5KG
Chairman, CAC**

2015 HIGHLIGHTS

George Wagner, K5KG assumed the duties of CAC Chairman in January 2015, and did the following to get his feet on the ground with this new assignment.

- Conducted phone calls with fifteen committee members, took notes on their service on the committee, discussed how long they had served, and gathered ideas about the operation and effectiveness of the committee. Following the calls, George reviewed his findings and observations with Doug, K4AC, who serves as PSC liaison to the CAC.
- Discussed with Al, K0AD, (past Chairman of the CAC) the duties of the Chairman, the rules of the road for managing the committee, and generally got his advice and guidance.
- Reviewed the ARRL Handbook for Contest Advisory Committee Members, and noted numerous areas in which the guidelines spelled in this 2004 publication were no longer being followed. Recognized this as something to be addressed in the near future.

TASKING COMPLETED IN 2015

A tasking completed in early 2015 dealt with the issue of having a mobile category in an ARRL HF contest.

- After significant deliberation, all CAC members expressed that having a mobile entry category in an ARRL HF contest was not necessary, and generally a “bad” idea. Some constituents were in favor of a mobile category, but none of their arguments outweighed the overwhelming arguments against it by the CAC members.
- An alternative was proposed for further consideration. This was to have a narrowly constructed, one-year experiment with a mobile category — with a declaration that the experiment should not be expected to lead to a permanent new category unless the experiment proved to be a resounding success. This idea was later refined into a proposal to implement an experimental mobile category in the ARRL 10m Contest, and was included on the list of proposed 2015 issues.

PROPOSED PROJECTS AND ISSUES FOR 2015

In February 2015, K4AC asked the Chairman to provide to the PSC a list of high priority topics for consideration by the CAC in 2015. This list of suggested high priority topics was needed for an April 2015 ARRL Board meeting. Upon receiving this request, the CAC mustered its forces and developed their list of suggested topics, many of which had their roots in the January phone calls with the members. A rather lengthy list was drafted by the committee, and subsequently each topic was voted on in terms of importance — high, medium or low. The resulting top-10 list was this:

SUMMARY OF TOPICS	PRIORITY
Youth in Contesting	High
Develop a CAC Mission statement	High

Revise the ARRL Handbook for CAC Members	High
Conduct ARRL Contest Survey	High
Remote Ham Radio	High
Get Tough On Cheating	Med
Replace the MAR multiplier with NB, NS, and PEI in Sweepstakes	Med
Reform ARRL Contest Awards Structure	Med
Adopt ARRL Centennial QSO Party for future years	Med
CAC Archives	Med
Add a CAC member to represent the non-Continental US Sections	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile Entry Category in ARRL 10 m Contest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low

By then end of 2015, the PSC indicated to the CAC that Youth In Contesting topic will be assigned to the CAC in 2016. Additionally, the Canadian MAR multiplier was deemed an issue for the RAC, and not the CAC.

No topics were assigned to the CAC by the PSC in 2015. For the CAC to not receive assignments for the entire year is a major concern to the CAC membership. This fundamentally allowed the CAC to go into hibernation due to inactivity which, in turn, had a negative impact on the interest and enthusiasm of sixteen talented, experienced and resourceful committee members.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE CAC MADE TO THE PSC

In August, Rocky Mountain Div. committee member, Robert Neece, K0KR, expressed a desire to resign from the committee. In a discussion between George, K5KG, and Brian, N5ZGT, Rocky Mountain Director and PSC Chairman, and subsequent discussions with Robert, he offered to stay with the committee if he could make suggestions about improving its effectiveness and efficiency.

Realizing that there existed a number of long-standing concerns about the effectiveness and work of the CAC, and with the blessings of Brian, N5ZGT, and Doug, K4AC, George and Robert undertook a project to assess the methods being used by the CAC to conduct its business. The concerns addressed were generally as follows:

- Guidelines in the CAC Handbook not being followed
- Concerns expressed by some members about the work and effectiveness of the CAC
- Concerns expressed by some committee members about League support
- Being dependent upon and delays in task assignments by the PSC
- Challenge of managing a sixteen member committee
- Utilizing email as the sole manner of communications among the committee members
- Relying on group voting as a method of deciding recommendations

George and Robert laid out a proposal with recommendations addressing the above mentioned issues. This proposal was reviewed in a September meeting with Brian and Doug, during which all of the issues and related recommendations were discussed in detail. Then, in October, a presentation was made to the full PSC.

Key recommendations presented to the PSC were as follows:

- PSC should make timely assignments of topics to the CAC.
- Classify all assignments to the CAC as “Projects” and “Issues”, thereby abandoning the term “taskings”.
 - Projects will be those assignments for which conclusions will be reached and recommendations made following deliberation by the committee.
 - Issues will be those assignments for which there may not be a definitive answer or solution, and only directional recommendations may be possible.
- Assign Projects and Issues to sub-committees of three to five members. Sub-committee members will be responsible for clarifying as necessary all Project and Issue assignments, conducting full deliberations of the topics, evaluating the plusses and minuses of topics, and making presentations and recommendations to the full CAC. Sub-committees will have access to GoToMeeting facilities as needed to carry out their work.
- Chairman will hold periodic conference calls using GoToMeeting (GTM) with the full CAC to review newly assigned Projects and Issues, make sub-committee assignments, and follow up on current assignments and prior approved recommendations and action items. These conference calls will be conducted with a published agenda, and followed by published meeting notes.
- Utilize GoToMeeting for conducting meetings, both at CAC-wide meetings, and at sub-committee meetings.
 - Use of GTM will not preclude the use of email by the committee members. However it will be a better method for group discussions of issues, especially for the sub-committees that may need to have extensive deliberations to reach consensus on particular issues.
- Ensure that positive and timely feedback is given by the PSC to the CAC regarding all of CAC decisions, recommendations, and the status of implementation of contest-related recommendations at HQ.
- Require each Division Director confirm annually his CAC representative’s continuation with the CAC, and ensure that new member appointments and term-limits are carried out in accordance with the CAC Handbook.
- Ensure that a roster of CAC members is published annually in QST.

The PSC has asked the CAC Chairman to implement the above recommendations as soon as practicable.

- Following several months of operation under the above recommendations, the PSC has asked the CAC undertake a project to revise the ARRL Handbook for CAC Members. To ensure that the guidelines spelled out in the Handbook are followed in the future, new Chairmen and new CAC members will be provided with the Handbook and its contents reviewed in detail by the current Chairman.

Additional recommendations for a major restructuring of the CAC were made to the PSC. They were as follows.

- Restructure the CAC into a smaller working group that can operate more effectively than a sixteen member body.
 - It is believed by this Chairman that having a sixteen member committee with representatives from each Division and the RAC is unnecessarily large. A group of carefully selected individuals could be a more effective and efficient approach to dealing with the Leagues HF contest matters. Furthermore, studies have shown that committees and teams in excess of 5 to 7 individuals are difficult to manage, are inherently less effective and efficient, and produce fewer useful results than smaller groups.
- Reconstitute the CAC into a broad-base, customer-centric group of active contesters and League representatives.
 - Form a committee of 5 CAC voting members plus 2 ex officio members
 - Chairman, Vice Chairman plus three at-large representatives of active contest community
 - A proviso that among the 5 there be individuals with expertise and interest in CW, Phone, Digital, Contest Rules and Log Checking
 - CAC Member Qualifications – see footnote¹
 - ARRL Contest Manager — for League context and implementation of CAC contest-related recommendations
 - PSC Liaison — as the bridge to policy issues

¹ CAC Member Qualifications¹

- Must have strong willingness to work on developing and supporting interesting and challenging new contests and improving existing contests to encourage participation by League members and contesters in general.
- All CAC members must be ARRL members, preferably Life Members
- 3 year term-limit, renewable
- Must attend annual CAC meetings at least once during 3 year term (at their own expense), preferably during their first year.
- Must participate and submit logs in at least two ARRL HF contests per year.

Realizing that this recommendation to reconstitute the CAC into a smaller body would be a significant change from the way the committee has been structured in the past, the PSC has asked for additional time to evaluate it further.

CHANGES IN CAC MEMBERSHIP

Jim Cochran, K0RH, a long-standing CAC member became a Silent Key in November 2015. Jim had been an active contester and valuable member of the CAC for many years. Jim's replacement as the Midwest Division representative on the CAC was filled by the appointment of Glenn Johnson, W0GJ. Glenn was welcomed to the committee in a December conference call, and we are looking forward to Glenn's contributions with his extensive knowledge and expertise in both contesting and DXing.

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George Wagner, K5KG
Georgek5kg@aol.com
941-400-1960

Contest Advisory Committee
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Atlantic – Charles D. Fulp, Jr., K3WW
1326 N 5th St., Perkasio, PA 18944

(H) 215-257-7472
(W) 215-257-5200
Email: k3ww@fast.net

Central – Greg W. Clark, K9IG
3700 W CR 100 S, Franklin, IN 46131

Email: greg@k9ig.com

Dakota – Al Dewey, KØAD
14800 38th Pl N, Plymouth, MN 55446-3341

(H) 763-550-0529
(W) 952-828-3112
Email: aldewey@aol.com

Delta – Stan Stockton, K5GO
PO Box 73, Harrison, AR 72602-0073

(P) 870-715-8228
Email: k5go@cox.net

Great Lakes – Dave Pruett, K8CC
2727 Harris Rd., Ypsilanti, MI 48198

(H) 734-481-0755
(W) 248-576-2063
Email: k8cc@comcast.net

Hudson – Dr. George Tranos, N2GA
PO Box 657, Copiague, NY 11726

Email: n2ga@aol.com

Midwest – Glenn R. Johnson
2215 Big Timber Road, Calmar, IA 52132

Email: vjohnson@paulbunyan.net

New England – Dennis Egan, W1UE
166 Wilson St, Marlborough MA 01752

Email: w1ue@verizon.net

Northwestern – Jim Cassidy, KI7Y
4224 S E View Acres Rd, Milwaukie, OR 97267

Email: ki7y@arrl.net

Pacific – David B. Ritchie, W6DR
15901 Ravine Rd, Los Gatos, CA 95030-3043

Email: w6dr@arrl.net

Roanoke - Don Daso, K4ZA
515 Withershinn Drive, Charlotte, NC 28262

(H) 704-594-9853
cell/work 704-408-7948
Email: k4za@juno.com

Rocky Mountain – Robert Neece, KØKR
P.O. Box 1177, Niwot, CO 80544-1177

(P) 303-830-7000
Email: rneece@bwsn.com

Chairman

Southeastern – George Wagner, K5KG
5113 Higel Ave., Sarasota, FL 34242

(H) 862 242 5490
(C) 941-400-1960
Email: GeorgeK5KG@aol.com

Southwestern – Glenn Rattmann, K6NA
14250 Calle De Vista, Valley Center, CA 92082

Email: k6na@cts.com

West Gulf – James K. George, N3BB
14721 Bear Creek Pass, Austin, TX 78737

Email: n3bb@mindspring.com
(H) 512-288-4635

RAC – Samuel A. Ferris, VE5SF
2618 Laycock Bay, Regina SK S4V 1VP
Canada

Email: ve5sf@sasktel.net
(H) 306-789-7866

Board Liaison – Donald D. Rehman, Sr., K4AC
18848 US Highway 441, Mount Dora, FL 32757

(P) 352-357-7222
Email: doug@k4ac.com

Staff Liaison – Bart J. Jahnke, W9JJ
225 Main St., Newington, CT 06111

Email: w9jj@arrl.org
Phone: 860-594-0232

Administrative Liaison – Sabrina Jackson
225 Main St., Newington, CT 06111

(P) 860-594-0288
Email: sjackson2@arrl.org