

**ARRL Public Relations Committee
Report to the Board of Directors
January 2021**

The 2020 PRC Committee Members

Committee Chairman, Sid Caesar, NH7C
Angel Santana, WP3GW
Andy Milluzzi, KK4LWR
Ed Efcak, WX2R
Scott Roberts, KK4ECR
John Bloodgood, KD0SFY
Gordon Mooneyhan, W4EGM
ARRL Headquarters Liaison Bob Inderbitzen, NQ1R
ARRL Board Liaison, Bill Morine, N2COP
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 coordinates and collaborates 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 into the remainder of 2020, following the goals and objectives set out by the PRC Chairman, in support of the cadre of 467 appointed Public Information Officers (PIOs) and 56 Public Information Coordinators (PICs) throughout the ARRL.

In addition to the continued focused attention on the needs of the ARRL PIO/PIC cadre, the PRC has expanded its outreach to include ARRL Section Managers and their Field Services teams. The PRC continues to refine its goals to increase cooperation, collaboration, and participation

between the PRC, the PIOs/PICs, and the ARRL Sections and Divisions, striving to enhance the tools and resources available for PIOs and PICs to serve their ARRL Section and the members of the ARRL.

Despite the COVID-19 Pandemic situation that has impacted our nation, our organization, and the members of the ARRL, the PRC has continued its important public relations and public information related responsibilities.

2020 Field Day After Action Review

During the last reporting period, the PRC reported on the successful execution of the PRC plans to enhance its outreach to PIOs and PICs for the 2020 ARRL Field Day, building on the successful Field Day outreach from the previous year.

Increased social media outreach was a primary PRC goal for the 2020 Field Day week. Reviewing the final data, the PRC noted great interest in the PRC requested *ARRL 2020 Field Day Statement* from the ARRL President, which included the promotion of the hashtag #FIELDDAY for use during Field Day by the League and its members. The PRC also was encouraged by the response back to the PRC from high profile Amateur Radio operators and current and former US Federal governmental representatives, including from the FCC Chairman Ajit Pai and former FEMA Director Craig Fugate, KK4INZ, who were both contacted by the PRC specifically for Field Day 2020. Together, Mr. Pai and Mr. Fugate reached almost 100,000 people with their Field Day specific social media messaging. Mr. Fugate specifically interacted with the PRC and its Twitter messaging, emphasizing the activation of the PRC Joint Information Center during Field Day, with his use of the #FIELDDAY and #ARRLPRC hashtags.

To develop an overarching review of the results of the 2020 PRC Field Day campaign, the PRC Chairman planned, developed and executed an After Action Review (AAR) for the PRC activities during the 2020 Field Day period. The PRC Chairman assembled an outside evaluation team to conduct interviews with the PRC to complete the AAR via video teleconference. The evaluation team consisted of two Amateur Radio operators with considerable experience with emergency management, Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES), and public information/relations experience. The evaluation team conducted interviews with the PRC, ascertaining strengths and weaknesses during the 2020 Field Day operational period.

The AAR team shared their initial conclusions with the PRC, following up with the PRC Chairman, discussing their final thoughts and conclusions. The feedback from the Field Day AAR team will be used in future outreach to the PIO/PIC cadre to increase levels of participation, assure accurate messaging to communities, both internal and external to the ARRL and its members, and improve Field Day outreach to the media.

2021 PRC Calendar of Events

The PRC has developed a 2021 PRC Calendar of Events, planning for future Amateur Radio events that the Committee has selected for promotion throughout the next year. These events include:

January	Winter Field Day
January	Kids Day
February	Girl Scouts Thinking Day on the Air
April	World Amateur Radio Day
April	International Marconi Day
May	Armed Forces Day
June	Hurricane Awareness
June	Field Day
June	Kids Day
August	National Preparedness Month
October	Scouts Jamboree on the Air
December	SKYWARN Recognition Day
December	Youth on the Air (YOTA)

2020 PRC Leonard Award Nomination

The Public Relations Committee has considered all submitted nominations for the 2020 *Bill Leonard W2SKE Professional Media Award*. The PRC has selected Josh B. Nass, KI6NAZ, as the nominee for the Leonard Award based on his YouTube series entitled *Ham Radio Crash Course*, which has garnered almost 170,000 subscribers.

Mr. Nass was originally nominated for the *Philip J. McGan Silver Antenna Award* which recognizes an outstanding ARRL Public Information Officer (PIO). His YouTube videos, while highly informative and educational, are part of a subscription service. The McGan award specifies that a recipient PIO cannot accept compensation. The PRC reevaluated the nomination and voted to reclassified Mr. Nass's nomination from the McGan Award to the Leonard Award, which recognizes journalists who can receive remuneration for coverage of Amateur Radio.

McGan and Leonard Awards Update

As previously reported to the Board, the PRC has been seeking answers to positively impact the number and quality of the nominations that are received for PRC consideration during each nomination period. Despite the increased outreach by the PRC in 2019 and 2020, there is a lack of nomination activity by PIOs and PICs regarding the McGan and Leonard awards.

During this reporting period, the PRC Chairman took the initial steps to establish a McGan and Leonard Awards PRC subcommittee to reevaluate the awards, assess improvements, and recommend enhancements to these awards. The PRC Chairman contacted previous McGan and

Leonard award recipients to request their assistance with feedback on their ideas about the future of the awards.

The feedback received by the PRC Chairman from the past award recipients was overwhelmingly in favor of continuing the awards, with numerous offers to assist the PRC with future steps and activities to keep these awards alive and relevant.

At the PRC level, the Committee voted to recommend modifications to the award process, to assist with awareness, have consistency with other League awards, and to streamline the nomination timelines to enhance participation levels.

The PRC has submitted these modification recommendations for Board consideration at the January 2021 ARRL Board of Directors meeting, proposing the following changes for ARRL's two media awards – the Philip J. McGan Silver Antenna Award and the Bill Leonard W2SKE Professional Media Award:

Modification of the annual nomination deadline to make March 31 of each year for both awards, covering activities that occurred in the previous calendar year

This will bring the two media awards into cycle alignment with six other prominent ARRL awards: the Hiram Percy Maxim Award, the ARRL Herb S. Brier Instructor of the Year Award, the ARRL Microwave Development Award, the ARRL Technical Service Award, the ARRL Technical Innovation Award and the ARRL Technical Innovation Award.

Revert to the pre-2009 structure of the Bill Leonard W2SKE Award

Removing the current three categories of print, audio and video to just one award category and remove the \$250 honoraria for each of the three categories, offering no further honorarium in association with the award.

The PRC recommends that these changes take effect with the next application nomination cycle of March 31, 2022 covering the period of January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

PRC Strategic Plan Development Update

This reporting period saw increased utilization of the planned aspects of the future PRC Strategic Plan. The PRC has reviewed the successes of 2020 for the focus areas had been planned at the beginning of the year. The identified focus areas include the selection of high-profile Amateur Radio related events to promote during the year in 2020, specialty focused PIO/PIC related social media outreach/education, and Field Day promotion and outreach.

The development of the multi-year PRC Strategic Plan 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. The PRC anticipates close coordination and collaboration with the new ARRL CEO, to better shape the vision of the future PRC Strategic Plan.

PR-101 Update

The PRC has reviewed the currently assembled material and content for the course. The PRC Chairman has asked the PRC to review other available social media information for inclusion into the newest PR-101 offering, to assure a quality offering and to assure currency with social media advances.

The PRC intends to submit the updated PR-101 course into the new ARRL Lifelong Learning platform, once it is available, later in 2021.

In Closing

The PRC operated for eight months in 2020 without the benefit of a fulltime Public Relations Manager at League Headquarters. Headquarters staff assigned to help the PRC on a temporary basis has proven to be fruitful and has assisted with PRC related activities, as the staff members have been very responsive to the needs and requests of the PRC. Nevertheless, the ability of PRC member volunteers to execute policy has been significantly diminished without the aid of a dedicated staff manager. For media outreach efforts to regain their level of activity, PRC members look to work with the new CEO in finding a candidate who can re-establish lost momentum, especially at a time when government officials and the general public need to be reminded of the many public service and educational benefits of Amateur Radio.

2020 has continued to be a challenging year for the PRC and the Amateur Radio community. The PRC sees 2021 as another opportunity to highlight the advancement and promotion of Amateur Radio.

Respectfully submitted,

Sid Caesar – NH7C
ARRL Public Relations Committee Chairman