

Public Relations Committee
Report to the ARRL Board of Directors
January 2007

During the second half of 2006 the Public Relations Committee focused on three areas: the “Hello” campaign, ongoing PIO assistance, and planning for the future.

“Hello”

There has been much discussion on the PR reflector about the Hello campaign and the year-end operating event. Jim McDonald, KB9LEI, began a “Featured Site of the Week” on the PR reflector about club sites that link to Hello-radio.org. The weekly posting introduced PIOs and clubs to other PIOs and clubs around the country and allowed for ideas to be exchanged. It also resulted in local pride if the club site was mentioned and this was seen on local amateur radio reflectors.

Kevin O’Dell, N0IRW, spent about 60 hours producing and editing the long form “Hello” video.

Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO, had an article published in the November issue of *Conformity* magazine: “Hello! Hello! Can Any One Hear Me?” He also worked with local hams for Hello message on Philadelphia Electric Co building and organized a local club to be part of Special Event on December 29-30. His local promotions included a radio interview and a podcast.

Bill Morine, N2COP, did a live radio talk show interview, a TV news interview and had a release published in the local daily, all concerning the 100th anniversary of Fessenden.

Sherri Brower, W4STB, wrote an article on success of the “Hello” campaign for the December 2006 issue of *QST*.

Bob Weinstock, W3RQ, assisted with the gathering of essays and photos for the article on amateur radio in 2016 that appeared in the November 2006 issue of *QST*.

The operating event planned for the week between Christmas and New Year’s to commemorate Fessenden’s broadcast occurred on December 29-30. This event brought much publicity from blogs to podcast and newspapers, television and radio. W1AW staff, ARRL staff and Connecticut amateurs operated from W1AW and were able to engage the non-ham audience via live blog and UTube video postings of the event. Special thanks goes to ARRL Membership Manager Katie Breen, W1KRB, for the blog and the video.

The Committee edited and contributed to “Hello” materials throughout the year.

Ongoing PIO assistance and general PR activities

Rich Moseson, W2VU presented a PR Forum at Boxboro Hamfest and provided a new ham orientation at one of the local colleges in New Jersey.

Kevin O'Dell, N0IRW, produced and edited the new "When All Else Fails..." video PSA. As PIC for the Oklahoma Section he increased the number of PIOs in the section from 4 to 28 and assigned the first PIO for Youth in Oklahoma. He helped obtain a Resolution from the State Corporation Commission about Amateur Radio Week. (The Corporation Commission regulates utilities in the state, including BPL if it is ever implemented).

Bob Josuweit, WA3PZO, posted comments to the ARRL Club Prez Reflector during the year and did several radio interviews about EPA flooding and Red Cross background checks. He also worked with webmaster of Holmesburg ARC (Philadelphia) to use club web site for updated Thanksgiving parade info. (Potential hits 2000 participants, 10000 spectators). Hello-radio link is on the home page of this club's site. He also presented PR forums at ARRL MD State Convention in July and Rochester, NY Hamfest/Convention in June.

Bill Morine, N2COP, is the PIC for North Carolina and each year he calls each of the PIOs for an annual review. He also sponsored, for the second year, a Section PIO Forum in conjunction with the Section convention at the Raleigh hamfest. Bill is also working with section officials in North Carolina endorsing ARRL's efforts at the federal level for antenna consistency and relief, and a campaign for similar state legislation. He worked with the Wilmington Star-News, a New York Times owned daily, on an article on hams in this coastal community being compromised in providing emergency communications because of antenna restrictions. This story was followed two days later by an editorial advocating homeowner associations to remove antenna restrictions for amateur radio antennas. The AP wire service picked up the story, which ran in many North and South Carolina papers.

Sherri Brower, W4STB, assisted Norm Schklar, WA4ZXV, with a PR forum at Stone Mountain, GA hamfest. She also provided a "fill-in the blanks" generic press release for ARES EMCOMM events which was included in Contact! In July she spoke with a reporter in South Florida about antenna restrictions.

Committee members meet once each month for a telephone conference and in September the ARRL Membership Manager, Katie Breen, joined them. Katie and the group shared some of their goals and ideas for recruiting and retaining ARRL members. We look forward to working with Katie, who states that "Every ham is an ambassador" since one of the slogans of the PR Committee has been "Every ham is a PIO."

In December the group judged the nominees for the Bill Leonard Award and the recommendation has been included for a Board of Directors vote during the January 2007 meeting.

Planning for the future

Discussion on the PR reflector often involves ARES and EMCOMM topics. Several committee members noticed many amateurs commenting that emergency communications was the only reason they obtained an amateur radio license. The PIOs need to work more closely with the local ARES groups. The 2007 campaign to educate the non-ham about the valuable emergency communications provided by amateurs will allow the PIOs to become more involved with ARES and will help them work with the media during major events. We feel very comfortable with the 2007 EMCOMM PR theme and the interest in promoting Amateur Radio that it will instill in many amateurs.

The FCC change regarding Morse code requirements for amateur licensing was too late for the 2006 "Hello" campaign. However the hello-radio.org web site is active and Field and Educational Services is now supplying the brochures. The 2007 Emergency Communications PR theme has a web URL of www.emergency-radio.org and it is linked to hello. The combination of the two themes is expected to attract non-hams to both the international communications and the emergency communications aspects of amateur radio.

Bill Morine, N2COP reports that amateurs in North Carolina are looking forward to an active year ahead in public relations as they anticipate the introduction of antenna consistency and relief legislation in the North Carolina General Assembly, and the reintroduction in the new Congress of similar federal legislation. In 2006, North Carolina ham radio operators testified before the North Carolina Joint Select Committee on Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Recovery. In early January 2007 Bill will speak at a Rotary meeting and focus on the emergency communications offered by amateur radio and the need for operators to erect antennas in order to provide these communications.

Kevin O'Dell, N0IRW will continue the work begun in 2006 with ARES in Oklahoma to get PIOs and ARES programs coordinated.

Other members of the Committee will be working with grassroots legislation, PIO and ARES coordination as well as the overall promotion of the 2007 EMCOMM PR program.

Respectfully submitted,
Sherri Brower, W4STB
Chairman, ARRL Public Relations Committee