

ARRL Ad-hoc Committee on Scouting Report to the Board – July 15, 2011

ARRL ad-hoc Committee on Scouting charge: To study the interface between ARRL and scouting organizations and make recommendations for improvement, and survey ARRL and scouting literature for effectiveness and adequacy.

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The ARRL ad hoc Committee on Scouting has spent the last six months discussing a number of topics as per its charge, including:

Assisting with the establishment of K2BSA at the 2013 National Scout Jamboree.

K2BSA has been a fixture at the BSA National Jamboree since the 1970s. The program area is composed of three elements: a demonstration station, licensing classes and VE exams, and radio merit badge instruction. At the 2010 National Jamboree, nearly 6000 youth scouts -- 13 percent of the total Jamboree attendance -- received thorough exposure to ham radio. Technician license classes and two VE exam sessions were held daily, resulting in 147 new Technicians, 33 Generals and 8 Amateur Extras. 210 scouts earned their Radio merit badges, too. The demonstration station was QRV on both VHF and HF -- 70 cm, 2, 6, 10, 15, 20, 40 and 80 meters -- utilizing at least 10 transceivers and as many monoband Yagis or dipoles atop 60 foot tall telephone poles, to make contacts using modes and methods such as phone, CW, PSK31, meteor scatter, IRLP, D-STAR, APRS and satellite. Many thousands of QSOs were made.

2010 marked the final year that the National Jamboree would be held at its longtime home of Fort AP Hill. In 2013 the Jamboree will take place at its new, permanent home at the Summit Bechtel Family National Scouting Reserve, located adjacent to the New River Gorge National River Park in West Virginia. Everything having to do with Jamborees of the past will need to be stood up from scratch at the new site, including K2BSA. An incredible opportunity exists, in part because the Scouting Reserve will be used as a year-round high-adventure base, for ham radio to become a permanent fixture and resource, and ARRL can help lead the charge. Some ideas include:

- Further strengthening its relationship with the Boy Scouts of America and establishing itself as a leader in facilitating certain resources to establish K2BSA at the Summit.
- Engaging ham radio manufacturers and (because Summit will be used year-round, likely negating the need to tear down and pack away certain equipment used for Jamboree) seek equipment donations in the name of establishing a potentially permanent ham radio presence before multiple thousands of youth – ham radio's legacy.
- Investigate and consider possible fundraising avenues so interested ham radio operators can donate towards the purchase of equipment or even a permanent structure at Summit for K2BSA operations.

Recommendation #1: ARRL commits to assisting with the establishment of K2BSA at the 2013 National Scout Jamboree as, at minimum, described above.

Improved marketing to the Scouting community.

The committee discussed ways for ham radio, and ARRL, to be better marketed to the Scouting community. Specific ideas include:

- Developing a plan to target and educate scouts (youth) and scouters (adults who support the youth in scouting) on the art and science of amateur radio as well as the value added of amateur radio's use within scouting activities. The plan should include efforts that would be executed at the ARRL HQ level as well as those that would be executed at the local level (i.e. by willing Field Organization volunteers and ham clubs who have access to local scout groups).
- Ensuring that ample scouting content is available on ARRL's website (more on this later).
- If BSA permits external organizations to sell its publications, offer the BSA radio merit badge book for sale in the ARRL web store (and any other badge that has ties to ham radio such as electronics, electricity, emergency preparedness, and communications) to establish another tie between ham radio and the scouting community.
- Further utilizing social media avenues. Social media is king to youth, and it's a place where the Scouting community should be hearing about ham radio as much as possible.

Recommendation #2: ARRL develops a plan to specifically target and educate the scouting community about ham radio as, at minimum, described above.

Scouting content on ARRL's website.

Now that ARRL's website is well established, an opportunity exists to improve and expand its Scouting-related content. While the current content found at <http://www.arrl.org/amateur-radio-and-scouting> is good, information directed to the Scouting community could be better tailored not just to scouts (youth) but also to scouters (adults), since ham radio can be beneficial to both audiences.

Recommendation #3: ARRL commits to generating and posting new Scouting related content onto the League website, taking into consideration the content recommendations provided in this committee's January 2008 report to the board (excerpt provided below).

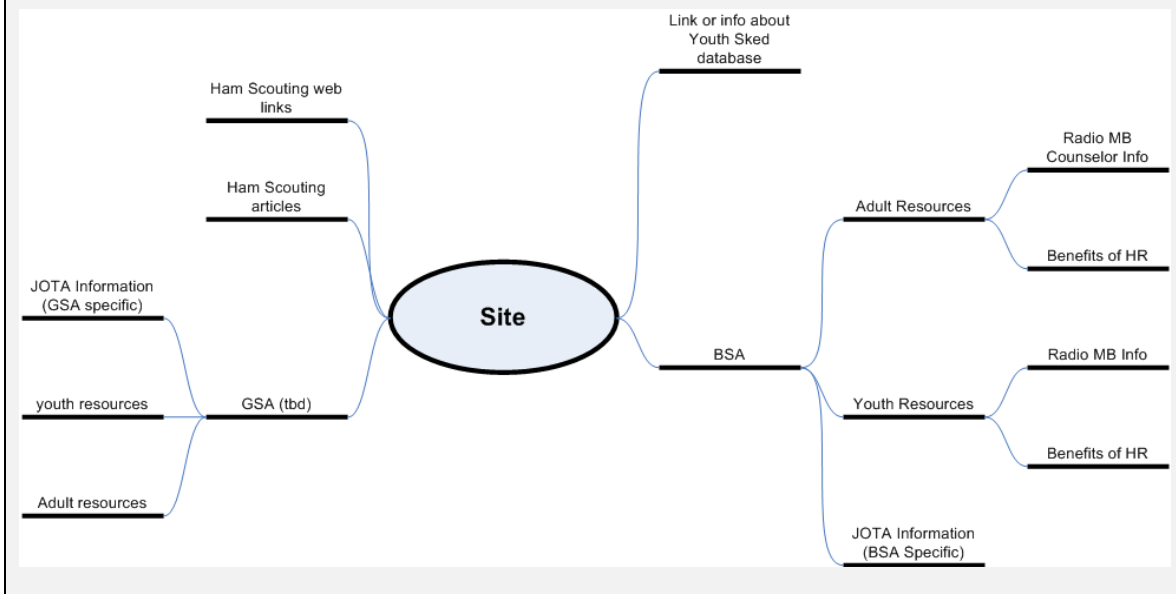
Excerpt from January 2008 ad-hoc Committee on Scouting report:

...Create an exclusive scouting section on the ARRL website. The purpose of this web content would be to provide scouts and scouters detailed information about ham radio as it relates to scouting, beyond what's offered by a brochure. It is stressed that this content target both youth and adults, be easily accessible to someone who visits the ARRL website, and be organized by theme (What scouts can do with ham radio at scouting events, Radio Merit badge, Girl Scout related content, resources for adults, etc.).

- The web section would be a general Scouting area, intended for Scouts only (i.e. not a general youth page that also includes scout content). Any other youth-related content would reside on a general youth section.
- Incorporate specific content for the Boy Scouts of America and specific content for the Girl Scouts of the USA.

- Incorporate specific content for scouts (youth) and specific content for scouters (adults)
- Provide links to the Technical Information Service (TIS) resource, youth skeds database, ARRL scholarships, etc.
- Incorporate Radio merit badge resources
- Incorporate Jamboree On the Air (JOTA) resources
- A video with scout aged hams talking about radio/communication.
- Repeated recommendation by Andrew Fenstermaker: The tween (between pre-teen and teenager) and teen demographics are extremely web oriented and savvy and the brochure should reflect that. They are also much more in-tune with lifestyle and media-heavy marketing. While these elements are difficult to incorporate into a brochure, they MUST be reflected in the website. There should be highly engrossing images, video footage if possible. This could include a 30 second to 2 minute video focusing primarily on kids talking about ham radio, talking on the air (How cool would it be to have a 12 year old talking on video with someone from India or Australia!?). Adult presence should be minimal.
- A similar video with an adult scouter addressing other adult scouters about the benefits and joys of ham radio in the pack, troop or crew.

A sample block diagram for such a site is presented below for consideration:



Wrapping up our work.

Since 2005 this committee has worked diligently to meet not only its original charge of studying the interface between ARRL and scouting organizations and make recommendations for improvement, and surveying ARRL and scouting literature for effectiveness and adequacy, but also to research a number of other topics related to amateur radio and scouting. Among the topics of research were (in no particular order):

- ARRL literature, publications, and web content related to Scouting
- Improvements to BSA’s Radio merit badge book
- ARRL-BSA Memorandum of Understanding officially signed on January 31, 2011

- Girl Scouts of the USA, exploration of its structure, programs related to ham radio, and reaching out to its national leadership
- Jamboree on the Air (JOTA)
- Support to K2BSA at the 2010 National Scout Jamboree
- Establishment of K2BSA at the 2013 National Scout Jamboree
- Effective marketing of amateur radio to the Scouting community

We are pleased to note that our original charge has been met, and we've accomplished so much more over these past six years. After all that's occurred we believe we've accomplished all that can be accomplished in an ad-hoc committee setting, and consequently believe it is appropriate to formally dissolve the committee. We hope that the ideas and recommendations generated within committee will be embraced and executed in a timely manner, and we look forward to working with ARRL's standing committees, Board of Directors, and staff to achieve that result.

It should be noted that the dissolution of this committee does not signal a change, in any way, to ARRL's dedication to the Scouting community and its involvement in ham radio. As has been stated in numerous past reports, ham radio and scouting form a near-perfect marriage per se. As the general ham population continues to age, there is a growing need to involve younger, enthusiastic people to its ranks to secure a healthy future. Likewise, as the scouting community remains active in such activities as backpacking, camping, and public service, ham radio serves as a resource to provide not only a measure of safety, but an additional element of excitement. Simply put, the ham community can benefit the scouting community, and vice-versa.

The ad-hoc Committee on Scouting wishes to thank the ARRL Board for its support and enthusiasm over the lifetime of the committee, and we are excited to remain engaged within the Radioscouting community moving forward.

Respectfully submitted,

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