

Program and Services Committee (PSC) Report to the Board – July 2014

ARRL Bylaw 39. The Programs and Services Committee shall: Guide development of service delivery mechanisms, evaluate services, and recommend program priorities; Advise Chief Executive Officer on services provided to individual members other than publications, including but not limited to contests and awards, information services including Logbook of the World and W1AW, and incoming and outgoing QSL bureau services; Advise Chief Executive Officer on volunteer programs, including but not limited to the field organization, affiliated clubs, volunteer examiners, Volunteer Counsel/Consulting Engineers, and educational initiatives; and Evaluate and recommend awards recipients to the Board for outstanding volunteer service or outstanding achievement.

PSC Committee members: Jim Boehner N2ZZ, David Norris K5UZ, Dick Norton N6AA, Doug Rehman K4AC, Dale Williams WA8EFK, ARRL Membership and Volunteer Programs Manager Dave Patton NN1N (Staff Liaison), Brian Milesosky N5ZGT (Chairman)

The Programs and Service Committee (PSC) is pleased to provide this report outlining progress made during the first six months of this Centennial year.

Following the formation of 2014's PSC last January, Doug Rehman K4AC and David Norris K5UZ were appointed to serve as liaisons to ARRL's Contest Advisory Committee (CAC) and DX Advisory Committee (DXAC), respectfully.

The PSC convened, with ARRL Regulatory Information Manager Dan Henderson N1ND assisting as recording secretary, for an interim meeting in St. Louis, Missouri on May 10 to address a lengthy list of challenges and opportunities in-person.

The following is a sampling of topics addressed (finer detail is provided in the attached meeting minutes):

CAC and DXAC topics. CAC Chairman Al Dewey KOAD and DXAC Chairman Arne Gjerner N7KA were asked to join the meeting via teleconference to brief PSC on their respective committee's progress. Their presence was very beneficial compared to merely receiving their written interim reports, as it provided us the opportunity to ask questions, emphasize points of importance, provide clarification where needed, and thank each chairman and his committee members for the great job they are doing. We expect to have them join future meetings in a similar fashion going forward.

The PSC authorized CAC to review the current "HF Contesting – Good Practices, Interpretations and Suggestions" document and make suggestions for possible additions and updates to it. CAC would provide their recommendations to PSC, which would pass them to the Contest Branch/Programs and Services Managers and the document author for their consideration.

The following CAC tasks were agreed on, the scope of which (detailed parameters, timeline, etc.) would be determined by July's PSC meeting:

- Investigate potential mobile categories for HF contesting.
- Investigate parameters CAC would recommend for a possible 24-hour category in the ARRL International DX contest.
- Review scoring topics within the ARRL 160-meter contest.
- Study the feasibility, pros/cons, etc. of potentially making submitted logs public for ARRL contests.

DXAC is presently engaged in its DXCC rules study task, which is expected to be concluded by the July meeting. PSC did not determine that additional DXAC tasks were necessary at the time.

ECAC Recommendations. PSC spent considerable time discussing recommendations within the Emergency Communication's Advisory Committee's (ECAC) report, and will need additional time to consider its recommendations at the July committee meeting. We remain grateful for the time and effort ECAC put into the work the Board asked it to do.

PSC ad-hoc Committee on Education and Clubs. Director Woolweaver (Chairman of PSC's ad-hoc Committee on Education) likewise joined the meeting via teleconference to brief PSC on his committee's progress. Director Weaver (Chairman of PSC's ad-hoc Committee on Clubs) provided a status report in-person. Interim reports from each ad-hoc Committee is appended to this report, and each committee is likewise thanked for their good work.

Expansion of card checker eligibility requirements. The PSC voted to modify card checker eligibility requirements to ensure that individuals seeking to become card checkers have themselves been recently active in the DXCC program. There have been instances where applicants seeking appointment have not submitted DXCC applications in years (*30 years* in the case of one recent applicant), have not exchanged QSL cards, and/or have not uploaded to LoTW. PSC believes that the integrity of ARRL's award programs extends to those entrusted to check QSL cards in the field and, thus, they themselves should have a current working knowledge of and involvement in the programs.

VHF and above contesting rules. The PSC voted to authorize the appointment of an ad-hoc committee to review and discuss various issues related to the ARRL VHF and above contest program. The following individuals have been subsequently appointed to this committee:

- Kermit W9XA (Chairman)
- Dave Patton NN1N
- Marty Woll N6VI
- Doug Rehman K4AC
- Joel Harrison W5ZN (pending acceptance to my invite)

All have considerable VHF+ contesting experience and perspective through involvement with their respective VHF+ contesting communities, and I believe they will provide us with sound advice and recommendations that will enable PSC to tackle the challenge of improving the entire contesting program.

Other contest related topics.

- PSC requested that headquarters staff explores opportunities to emphasize more activity of the 6 and 10 meters bands. Ideas included a combined 6- and 10-meter contest, a 10 meter grid square award, and emphasis on portable operations.
- PSC agreed to expand the Field Day message handling bonus to include formats other than the traditional NTS Radiogram (i.e. ICS-213 and other relevant formats), effective 2015.
- PSC asked staff to investigate the return of the Midnight Special operating event and provide its thoughts and recommendation at the July committee meeting.

Additional topics.

- Electronic administration of ARRL VE exams. We are pleased to hear of ARRL's evolution towards electronic VE exam administration and scoring, and hope that this transition continues to receive the support and resources needed to come to fruition.
- Public Service Communications Manual rewrite. The PSC agreed that Headquarters staff should proceed with a rewrite of the Public Service Communications Manual and provide a status report to the PSC at the July committee meeting.
- ARRL affiliated club / special service club logo, branding. The PSC wishes to thank Sue Fagan and Harold Kramer for designing attractive logos for clubs to promote their ARRL affiliation or Special Service status in newsletters, on websites, and emails. Both logos were designed to incorporate a ribbon that denotes how long a particular club has been affiliated, which will add additional attraction to displaying the logo.



I thank each member of the PSC, and its advisory committees for their dedication to addressing a number of important issues and opportunities during this special and historic year of the League.

I would also like to take a moment to personally thank Jim Weaver K8JE for the perspective and wisdom he shared within PSC and as chairman of its ad-hoc Committee on Clubs. We wish you the best of luck in your retirement from the ARRL Board, Jim! 73.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Mileshosky N5ZGT (Chairman)

ARRL Programs and Services Committee Minutes May 10, 2014

The Programs and Services Committee of the ARRL Board met at the St. Louis Airport Marriott on Saturday May 10th. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM CDT with Brian Milesosky, N5ZGT in the chair. In attendance were committee members Directors David Norris, K5UZ, Jim Weaver, K8JE, Doug Rehman, K4AC, Dick Norton, N6AA and Vice Director Jim Boehner, N2ZZ. Also in attendance were Dave Patton NN1N, ARRL Membership and Volunteer Programs Manager and Dan Henderson, N1ND. ARRL Regulatory Information Manager (in the capacity of recording secretary).

After discussion, staff was asked to verify that the Committee liaisons to the CAC and DXAC were on the respective e-mail reflectors. It was clarified that while the advisory committees can discuss topics, that they cannot “self task” and bring forth recommendations to implement actions without a tasking from the PSC.

From 9:30 until 9:45 Al Dewey K0AD joined the meeting via teleconference to discuss the CAC report.

After the teleconference with Mr. Dewey, it was decided by consensus to ask the CAC to review the current “HF Contesting – Good Practices, Interpretations and Suggestions” document and make suggestions for possible additions to it. The recommendations from the CAC would then be passed on to the Contest Branch/Programs and Services Managers and the author for their consideration in an updated/revised document.

It was decided by consensus to delay tasking the CAC to conduct a general survey of the ARRL Contest program until current staffing and IT related issues could be resolved. Further discussion on the CAC report was deferred until later in the day.

From 10:02 until 10:34 Arne Gjerner, N7KA, joined the meeting via teleconference to discuss the DXAC report. Further discussion on the report was deferred until later in the day.

From 10:54 until 11:07 David Woolweaver, K5RAV, joined the meeting via teleconference to discuss the report of the ad hoc committee on Education.

Dr. Weaver presented the report of the ad hoc Committee on Clubs. He updated the committee on the status of a list of recommendations previously discussed. Some of the recommendations are now in place while others are pending due to the need of IT resources to complete them.

The committee was on break from 11:59 until 1:06 and resumed discussion of the club report. Still of concern to members of the PSC is the way the ARRL web handles searches for clubs in specific locations. The PSC will discuss this topic further at its July meeting.

The committee moved to consider the status of current and future advisory committee taskings and planning.

It was agreed not to have the CAC, pursue a previously discussed comparative analysis of CQ and ARRL contest rules.

It was agreed that the PSC chair, MVP manager, and PSC liaison to the CAC will develop language for a tasking to the CAC on mobile categories for HF contesting to be presented for consideration at the July committee meeting.

On the motion of Mr. Milesosky and second of Mr. Norris it was VOTED by a tally of 5 in favor to 1 opposed to task CAC to investigate what parameters they would recommend for a possible 24-hour category in the ARRL International DX contest. Specific tasking language to be developed by the PSC chair, MVP manager, and PSC liaison to the CAC and presented for consideration at the July committee meeting.

On the motion of Mr. Norris and second of Mr. Rehman, it was unanimously VOTED to task the CAC to investigate scoring in the ARRL 160-meter contest. Specific tasking language to be developed by the PSC chair, MVP manager, and PSC liaison to the CAC and presented for consideration at the July committee meeting.

On the motion of Mr. Rehman and second of Mr. Norris it was VOTED to add a Single Operator Unlimited category that allows passive assistance to all Single Operator categories in ARRL VHF/UHF contest to be implemented in calendar year 2015.

On the motion of Mr. Norton and second of Dr. Boehner it was VOTED to task the CAC to study the feasibility of making submitted logs public for ARRL contests. Specific tasking language to be developed by the PSC chair, MVP manager, and PSC liaison to the CAC and presented for consideration at the July committee meeting.

The committee discussed DXAC issues and took no additional actions.

Under old business, Mr. Patton and Mr. Henderson updated the committee on the ARRL Centennial activities. The on-the-air activities have become extremely popular with a total of over 1.5 million contacts logged.

The Section Youth Coordinator field appointment has been implemented and is available for Section Managers to fill with suitable volunteers.

The Amateur Radio Service to Scouting Award is still progressing with CEO Dave Sumner, K1ZZ, serving as the interface with the Boy Scouts of America. It is still currently under consideration by the representatives of the BSA.

The committee next considered new business. The ECAC report was review and significant discussion on the report ensued. The committee will continue discussions on the various aspects of the ECAC report, with the goal of making specific determinations related to the report at the July PSC meeting.

The committee next discussed the electronic administration of ARRL VE exams. This is a current project of the VEC and the PSC still sees this as an ongoing goal for the ARRL.

On the motion of Mr. Rehman seconded by Mr. Boehner it was unanimously VOTED to recommend: "that the ARRL Board of Directors select Kai Siwiak, KE4PT, and Bruce Pontius, N0ADL, as recipients of the 2013 Doug DeMaw, W1FB, Technical Excellence Award for their article "How Much 'Punch' Can You Get from Different Modes," which was published in the December 13 issue of QST magazine."

The committee discussed a recommendation from Mr. Patton that would expand the requirements to become an ARRL card checker. On the motion of Mr. Norris seconded by Dr. Weaver, it was VOTED to recommend that DXCC Rules be changed to read:

" 2) c) ii) Candidates must be ARRL members who hold a DXCC award endorsed for at least 150 entities, and have also submitted at least one application to DXCC via LoTW or traditional means within either of the last two calendar years;"

AND

"2) d) Applications for DXCC card checkers are approved by the Director of the ARRL Division Director in which they reside, the Membership and Volunteer Programs Manager, and the DXCC/Awards Manager. After the approvals, the Membership and Volunteers Programs Manager will then make the appointment."

Mr. Norton left the meeting at 5:03 PM.

On the motion of Mr. Rehman, seconded by Dr. Boehner, it was VOTED to authorize the PSC Chairman to appoint an ad hoc committee to discuss various issues related to the ARRL VHF and above contest program, said committee to present an interim report to the PSC at the July committee meeting.

The committee agreed that Headquarters staff should proceed with a rewrite of the Public Service Communications Manual and provide a status report to the PSC at the July committee meeting.

The committee discussed the concept of redesigning the ARRL affiliated club / special services club logos, such updated logos being available sometime later in the year. No further action was required.

On the motion of Dr. Boehner, seconded by Dr. Weaver, the committee requested that headquarters staff explores opportunities to emphasize more activity of the 6 and 10 meters bands. Ideas included a combined 6- and 10-meter contest, a 10 meter grid square award, and emphasis on portable operations.

The committee agreed to expand the Field Day message handling bonus to include formats other than the traditional NTS Radiogram, effective 2015.

The committee requested that the return of the Midnight Special operating event be investigated by headquarters staff and a recommendation be provided at the July committee meeting.

There being no other business, the committee adjourned at 6:05 PM.