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Remembering Joel Kleinman

“Dozens of people participate in the process that results in QST reaching ARRL members each month. For most of the past 35 years Joel Kleinman, N1BKE, has played an essential role in that process. With deep regret we must report that this is the last issue that will bear Joel’s special touch.”

QST Managing Editor Joel Kleinman, N1BKE, died August 18 as a result of a fire at his home in Meriden, Connecticut that also injured his wife Jayne. The ARRL staff was shocked and inexpressibly grieved by the news. Those of us who enjoyed the privilege of working closely with him know all too well that we have lost a brilliant editor and an irreplaceable, devoted colleague.

Joel began his career at the ARRL in June 1976 when he was hired for a program to introduce space science to students using amateur satellites – a precursor to today’s Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) program. At the time he was unlicensed but soon became WA1ZUY. He was active in local clubs and particularly enjoyed the teamwork and camaraderie of Field Day.

A gifted writer and editor with a master’s degree in journalism and newspaper experience, Joel moved into an editorial position less than a year after joining the ARRL staff. He moved up rapidly, becoming QST editorial and production supervisor in 1978. In 1988 he was named to head the team responsible for the editing and production of the ARRL’s books and audio media.

In 2001 Joel returned to his first love, QST, as Managing Editor. He occupied that position on the masthead for more than 11 years, maintaining the highest editorial standards while helping to guide the evolution of our membership journal. With the rest of the QST staff he had recently accepted the new challenge of producing a digital edition, adding another dozen deadlines to the annual editorial calendar.

We will miss Joel’s good nature and dry humor, his intelligence and wide range of interests, and even his inexplicable fondness for the New York Yankees. He possessed two traits that are seldom found together: an obsession with quality and accuracy coupled with even-temperedness. He was as forgiving of others as he was demanding of himself. Badly injured 30 years ago when a car cut in front of his motorbike and forced a collision, he lived with the resulting limp and other medical challenges without complaint. Joel had particular empathy for Dick Paton, the author of the April 2012 QST article that won the Cover Plaque Award for that month, after Dick was injured in an accident very similar to Joel’s soon after the article appeared. Joel and I visited Dick to present his award at the hospital where he was undergoing rehabilitation.

The cause of the fire that took Joel’s life is under investigation at this writing and we do not presume to know exactly what happened, but the circumstances bring to mind another tragedy that struck the Amateur Radio community in Germany last year. The Deutscher Amateur Radio Club lost the chairman of

its DX and HF Contesting Committee, Dr. Lothar Wilke, DL3TD, to a fire that apparently started in the power supply of his personal computer. These days it is a rare household that does not have multiple pieces of electronic equipment plugged in and continuously powered on. Equipment can fail, unpredictably and unexpectedly, in ways that cause fires. These two tragedies may not have been avoidable, but they should remind us of what we should do to protect ourselves and those we love.

The basic rules of fire safety are not difficult or expensive to follow. Smoke detectors should be installed on every level of every home, especially in or near bedrooms, and their batteries replaced every six months. Fire extinguishers should be well maintained and readily available – including in the ham shack – and every adult member of the household should know how to use one, although fire safety experts emphasize that getting everyone out safely and gathered together in one place is the top priority.

In the coming weeks and months we will work hard to make sure that QST continues to meet Joel Kleinman’s high standards. Without him it won’t be easy, but it’s the least we can do to pay tribute to our departed colleague and friend.

Electronic Voting

ARRL Full Members in the Hudson and Northwestern Divisions will be the first to have the opportunity to vote electronically in an ARRL election. This year there are contested elections for Director in both divisions and for Vice Director in the Northwestern. The incumbents in the Central, New England, and Roanoke Divisions have been re-elected without opposition, along with the Vice Director of the Hudson Division.

Around October 1, every Full Member in the Hudson and Northwestern Divisions for whom we have a valid email address will be sent a message explaining the voting process. All other Full Members in the two divisions will be sent a paper ballot by mail as in the past, although the format will be somewhat different than for previous elections and the ballots will be returned to an address in Minnesota. Section Manager balloting is unchanged for now, and will continue to be conducted with paper ballots mailed back to Newington.