

News

ARRL Board Bestows Awards at 2011 Annual Meeting

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The ARRL Board of Directors had the pleasure and distinction of bestowing three annual awards at its 2011 Annual Meeting -- the ARRL International Humanitarian Award, the George Hart Distinguished Service Award and the Bill Leonard, W2SKE, Professional Media Award for print, audio and video.

The ARRL International Humanitarian Award

Ron Tomo, KE2UK, of North Bellmore, New York, is the recipient of the 2010 ARRL International Humanitarian Award. Tomo's life exemplified Public Service through Amateur Radio, from providing phone patches during the Vietnam War, and providing communications support during 9/11 with MARS and the United States Service Command, as well as serving in the US Coast Guard Auxiliary as a Communications Officer where he played a pivotal role during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Tomo also is a part of the Emergency Preparedness Team at the Nassau University Medical Center where he is the hospital's Chief Information Officer.

During the Haitian earthquake in January 2010, Tomo -- at his own expense -- served with a team of doctors, providing communication support between the on-site doctors and the hospital in Miami. According to Jack Satterfield, W4GRJ -- one of his many nominators -- Tomo provided critical communication links at multiple levels, "from coordinating helicopter relief to a stranded village, to handling emergency evacuations to the nearby USS Comfort hospital ship. Ron even provided the extra hands needed to hold flashlights at the operating table when the power went out at night. He went on a rescue mission to help carry stretchers, bringing back patients to their facility. Ron has a polio-inflicted disability which never seemed to slow him down; however, in the dark and confusing night while carrying a stretcher, he missed a step and took a pretty bad fall. He needed medical attention, but Ron was adamant about seeing to the other patients before himself. His efforts while in Haiti were undoubtedly and directly attributable in the saving of so many lives."

ARRL New York City/Long Island Section Manager Mike Lisenco, N2YBB, concurred: "At his own expense -- about \$10,000 -- Ron purchased more than 15 new radios and added others from his massive collection which he used to set up a tactical network in a tent hospital. This network proved to be a lifesaving setup where Ron was personally credited by the doctors in his tent hospital for saving at least eight lives and helping hundreds more due to his ability to find hospitals to handle the patients who had been triaged and stabilized. Ron gave out his radios to several people and hospitals, thereby giving his hospital both incoming and outgoing communications to expedite the transport and intake of new patients."

The ARRL International Humanitarian Award is conferred upon an amateur or amateurs who demonstrate devotion to human welfare, peace and international understanding through Amateur Radio. The ARRL established the annual prize to recognize Amateur Radio operators who have used ham radio to provide extraordinary service to others in times of crisis or disaster.

The George Hart Distinguished Service Award

This year, John Thomas, W3FAF, of Mahtomedi, Minnesota, was named the recipient of the George Hart Distinguished Service Award. He was selected for this honor earlier this year by the ARRL Executive Committee. Licensed since 1956, Thomas -- an ARRL Life Member -- has been an ARRL Official Relay Station since 1959 and was a part of the National Traffic System from 1959-2004. An ARRL Official Observer for 20 years, he also served as the Official Observer Coordinator for the Minnesota Section for six years.

According to ARRL Minnesota Section Manager Skip Jackson, KS0J, Thomas has always been willing to serve the Minnesota Section: "When I first became Minnesota Section Manager, John told me that he would serve in whatever capacity I needed help. That is John. He has served the ARRL for more than 50 years and been in the NTS for almost that long. He has helped and taught many people about the radio sciences and his list of accomplishments is long indeed."

Eliot Ricciardelli, KE0N, knows Thomas as a member of the Stillwater Amateur Radio Association (SARA) and as an NTS traffic handler. "In my dealings with John via the NTS (as an NTS participant) and as a person, I can echo what has been said about him: friendly, knowledgeable, professional and always promoting Amateur Radio," he told the ARRL. "John is, in my view, an outstanding example of the kind of individual who moves our service forward in positive and meaningful ways."

Another SARA member, Patrick Tice, WA0TDA, said Thomas has done "so much in so many ways for Amateur Radio. I think his success over the decades has to do with his low-key, patient, friendly attitude toward problem-solving. I always felt that I could approach John anytime with a technical question, and even if I was full of baloney, John would have a way to provide a reasonable -- and non-judgmental! -- answer."

Named for longtime ARRL Communications Manager George Hart, W1NJM, this award was [established by the Board at its 2009 Second Meeting](#). Hart was also the chief developer of the National Traffic System (NTS). It is conferred upon an ARRL member whose service to the League's Field Organization is of the most exemplary nature. Selection criteria include the nominee's operating record with the National Traffic System, participation within the Amateur Radio Emergency Service® (ARES®), or station appointments and/or leadership positions held within the ARRL Field Organization.

The 2010 Bill Leonard, W2SKE, Professional Media Award

This year marks the second year in which the Bill Leonard Award has been restructured to include the three categories. This change was made in 2009 after an ad hoc committee of ARRL officials, professional journalists and academicians recommended segmenting the award to represent the broadest possibility of submissions from traditional and emerging media. This year the following professional media people won the Bill Leonard Award in their respective categories:

- *Audio*: Bill Colley, host of the afternoon drive time talk show on WGMD-FM in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. His guest was Bill Duveneck, KB3KYH, of the Sussex Amateur Radio Association ([SARA](#)). Colley exhibited the attribute most sought in all talk show hosts: that of eliciting the best in his guest. Through a well modulated and even flow, Colley and Duveneck entertained and educated listeners about Amateur Radio and greeted callers with questions on why ham radio is a great hobby.
- *Video*: Jennifer Crompton, producer for *New Hampshire Chronicle* on WMUR-TV of Manchester, New Hampshire. The weekday half hour news magazine featured a seven minute segment which followed the 2010 ARRL Field Day for the Contoocook Valley (New Hampshire) Radio Club ([CVRC](#)). Crompton dived into the spirit of Field Day and answered the age-old question: Why do hams want to keep looking for that elusive QSO? Her excellent video news piece was acclaimed by members of the ARRL's Public Relations Committee as "possibly the best TV coverage on Amateur Radio ever."
- *Print/Text*: While a staff writer for [The Washington Post](#), Phillip Lucas covered the 2010 ARRL Field Day with the Loudon (Virginia) Amateur Radio Club in his article "Loudon Radio Fans Dash to Test

Their Skills.” Members of the ARRL’s Public Relations Committee felt that Lucas captured the essence of Field Day by showing operators trying to make contacts across a variety of modes and conditions. The article was picked up by wire services, appearing across the globe. Lucas now works at [The News Journal](#) in Wilmington, Delaware.

The Bill Leonard, W2SKE, Professional Media Award is a national level award given each year to honor three professional journalists whose outstanding coverage best reflect the enjoyment, importance and public service value the Amateur Radio Service. This award -- created as a tribute to the late CBS News President Bill Leonard, W2SKE, an avid Amateur Radio operator -- is divided into three categories, each with its own award: audio, visual and print.

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