

History

This Month I interviewed ASHRAE LI past President Don Kane. Don is a longtime member ASHRAE and a major contributor to the LI chapter.



Name & Title:

Donald W. Kane, P.E.

Born & Raised:

Born in Mamaroneck, NY...Moved to Long Island in 1951

Schools:

Stevens Institute of Technology (Hoboken, NJ)

Degrees:

Bachelor of Engineering



What attracted you to engineering and the HVAC industry?

Having always been interested in how things work (or don't work), the call of an engineering education was too strong to resist. Receiving a general engineering education (electrical, mechanical and civil) at Stevens prepared me for a lifetime of learning and allowed for a varied career path (Underwriters Laboratories, LILCO, Penske GM Power, Long Island Rail Road, Cashin Spinelli & Ferretti and Nassau Suffolk Engineering & Architecture).

What was your first job in the HVAC industry and where did it lead?

Unlike many of my predecessors in the Chapter Presidential lineage, I have always been an engineering "generalist", as a result of the broad-based approach during my undergraduate work at Stevens Institute of Technology. The first 13 ½ years at the LIRR was spent dealing with the engineering of the rolling stock and, not surprisingly, a critical issue was always customer comfort. As the age of the fleet ranged from 30+ years old to "brand new" the challenge of providing cost effective comfort was a challenge. With the introduction of the "Bi-Level" coach configuration in Diesel Territory, I was involved with the qualification testing (at the manufacturer's Australian Facility) of the rooftop HVAC units, which were a first for the LIRR, and established a new "standard" for the rolling stock. When I retired from the LIRR and went to work for CSF (Surety Consulting) and NSEA (design of municipal facilities) HVAC became an increased segment of my work scope.

Describe the industry at that time.

Rail transit HVAC at the time was pretty much what had been done since the inception of heating and cooling on railcars; compressor/condenser equipment hung under the car (subject to mechanical damage and fouling from trackbed debris. The evaporators were incorporated into the overhead area of the car requiring significant "plumbing" to connect with the undercar equipment. While the semi-hermetic compressors were rebuildable, to do so required taking a car out of service for removal. If the failure was due to electrical causes, the entire system had to be purged and pumped down to eliminate all traces of contamination. All controls were relay based with simple thermostatic input. With the advent of redundant rooftop units employing microprocessor controls, the failure of a single unit would still allow for the maintaining of a reasonable comfort level until the equipment was shopped for a relatively rapid swap of the rooftop package.

4. How and when did you get started in ASHRAE?

While I had been familiar with ASHRAE standards, it wasn't until I started working for CSF/NSEA that Rich Rosner suggested I join ASHRAE and, several years later, suggested I get involved with the Chapter Operations.

5. What was your ASHRAE chapter, regional and Society experience?

In 2010, I started on the reception committee (the starting point for most BOG members) and the following year became a BOG member and Chair of the Chapter Technology Transfer Committee (CTTC). Following the progression (Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Vice-President) my turn as Chapter President came in the 2016-2017 year, which coincided with our Chapter hosting the Region I Chapters Regional Conference (CRC), for which I was Treasurer.

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6. What were the major issues facing ASHRAE during your presidency?

The major concerns were to improve the Chapter's financial status and to ensure that the Chapter hosted a successful CRC.

7. What was your presidential theme?

The successful hosting of the CRC became our Theme for that year.

8. What do you consider to be the major accomplishments during your term?

Working with Jim Price and Region I as a PIE Sponsor organization, we were able to provide technical content with continuing education credit to our members as well as to introduce or update our membership with regard to the latest HVAC/R technology and regulations. We were able to host a group viewing of the ASHRAE webinar as well as a successful YEA program.

9. Did any humorous events take place during your term?

Too busy with the CRC to notice :-)

10. Are there any things that you wish you could have done differently?

I would have liked to increase the participation of our membership in the various activities, however the need to focus on the CRC took precedence over other goals.

11. What events have changed the industry since your presidency?

Increasing regulations regarding Climate Change (refrigerants) and energy use.

12. What has ASHRAE meant to you personally?

Having worked in positions where I was the customer, the designer or the consultant to the Surety (when a project had gone "south"), the ASHRAE community has provided a network of individuals expert in their fields available to "pick their brains" as well as to have my brain "picked".

13. What advice would you give to a young person entering the HVAC field?

Delve into the history of HVAC/R. Learn the whys of where we are at today, and how we got there. Learn from Dan Holohan's "Dead men".

14. What other interests and/or hobbies do you have?

Fishing, wood working, metal working (welding) and auto mechanics and, when the weather permits, motorcycling.

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