

Bob,

Providing a spot to remember an Elmer who might be gone but not forgotten is a great idea. The time and inspiration of an Elmer is incalculable.

In some cases, being an mutual Elmer has incalculable benefits! This is what happened with my Elmering three older men.

The first, W800, was a high school graduate who eventually worked for Westinghouse and was instrumental in maintaining the robot man, "Elektro" and his dog "Sparky," at the 1939 World's Fair. He also worked on the installation of the famous KDKA radio transmitter. He retired from the Naval Research Laboratory and had 29 patents in his name. He was also the inventor of the ultrasound transducer that eventually led to the modern ultrasound technology we now have in our medical fields.

When Jim retired and moved two streets down from me, we met and became fast friends. My Elmering to Jim, this genius, was that I was young and could do the tower work, attic crawling and other strenuous things that his failing body could no longer do. When he build an amateur radio satellite station he couldn't learn to use the Commodore 64 computer and software to calculate his Keplerian elements for tracking the satellites. I had to learn computers well enough to do this and this eventually led to me being able to not only use a computer but also to service and build them.

Our friendship became so close that most of the time I knew that the telephone was going to ring and it would be Jim. It was the same with him. On many occasions he would walk to the telephone because he knew that I was going to call him. In each case the phone would be answered on the first ring!

This became a mutual Elmer relationship. Although Jim has been gone for many years, he is still missed very much.

The second was George, W8GSN. I knew George by reputation only for many years. His name and call sign was well known in this area, even though he lived several miles from here. I wanted to meet this man for a long time and eventually did so when he moved to my town. We became fast friends.

George was a radio operator for the WV State Police, which back in those days used CW for state wide communications. He also was instrumental in developing and installing a broadcast station in the WV School for the Deaf and Blind in Romney, WV which is still in existence. He also taught electronics and radio station operation to the blind for many years. The school wanted to obtain the station call sign of WGSN but George wouldn't agree to it. So they got the call sign that included his three initials. (WG.F - Can't remember his middle initial)

I was able to be an Elmer to George, once again because I was much younger and could do his antenna work as well as metal work that required tools he didn't have.

The third was Verne, WA8ZZR, who once again was an old man, getting his first ticket when he was 67 years old! He was a self-educated electrician and was one of those who helped build the power house where I worked for 22 years. He also worked on the local railroad. It wasn't until I had known him for almost 20 years that I learned that he also ran a moonshine still during the depression to feed his family!

Verne wanted to know everything. Through this insatiable curiosity, it became necessary for me to learn the use of integrated circuits. He would build something using these 14 legged fuses and many times the circuit not work and it became necessary for me to learn to use ICs in order to figure out what he had done wrong. And, once again, it was my youth that allowed me to help him with his projects that his body wasn't able to do anymore.

An honorable mention is Ken, W8ULA, who had the first ham station that I ever saw. He was also the first and only black ham operator I saw for decades. His transmitter was homebrew on a 3-shelf wooden bookcase. It was breadboard style of course and had the most beautiful AM audio I had ever heard. Ken was a gentleman of the first order and helped inspire me to want to become a ham, which happened several years later. I have never forgotten Ken.

Thank you for allowing me to vent these feelings Bob. Feel free to use any, all or none of what I have written.

Very 73

Al K8AXW