

A Tribute to Marc Mislange – Hewlett-Packard History Visionary

John Minck
Palo Alto, CA
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What words come to mind when I think of Marc Mislange?

Friend, Energetic, Obsessive, Creative, Enthusiastic, Gourmet, Oenophile, Engineer, Visionary, Tireless, Motorcyclist, Analytical, Hewlett-Packard, Motivated, Inquisitive, Customer Hero, Historian, Thorough, Generous, Insightful, and many more.

In all of our common years of our careers at Hewlett-Packard, during the Golden Years of High-Tech in the second half of the 20th century, Marc and I never met. Nor did we know of each other. I wish I had met him sooner, because he was such a wonderful person to know.

It was only in the 21st century, as he was creating his Virtual Measurements HP Museum, on the Internet, which he called HPMemory.org, that we met. He came to use my written Narrative History of HP for background. In 2007, he came to Palo Alto, to present some HP historical work with Ken Kuhn and Glenn Robb. Marc and Ken, from Alabama, who also had an HP-oriented website, both had basements full of vintage HP instruments. Ken and Marc met, after bidding against each other on EBay, for old HP products, quickly deciding to work together. Ken had also helped with some editing of some of Marc's English, which he always apologized for.

That writing soon became our collaboration and passion for the last 4-5 years, as Marc created a special archive on his website for the HP Memoirs of retired employees, who wished to share their life and HP careers with the world. These memoirs ranged from Jim Hall, the designer of the first LaserJet printer, which changed the world, to Dave Cochran, the algorithm genius behind the HP-35 electronic slide rule, to Betty Haines, the company telephone operator, who told charming personal stories of her interactions with Dave and Bill.

At the time of his passing, Marc had published exactly 20 of these personal stories of the exceptional work culture of HP, right from the people who lived there. Cort Van Rensselaer's memoir even went back in time, to 1943, when he worked part time in the Polly & Jake building, for the fledgling company in WWII. Marc was SO proud of this accomplishment, as well he deserved. They downloaded the memoirs by the hundreds. People really did want to read about those golden years, and the remarkable work culture of HP.

Like all of you, I can't believe Marc is gone. His plans and visions were underway. But we have lost that precious enthusiasm and spark which he brought to each of us. I miss him already.