

Memories of Marc Mislange

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I begin my tribute to Marc with an old saying, "Great minds think alike." A little over four years prior to Marc and I learning of each other and becoming friends we both yearned for a museum of HP instruments. Both of us were investing our time and money into collecting vintage pieces of HP test equipment for a personal museum that would later become an online museum. We both were doing research on HP company history – which at the time was not collected nor easily available.

Marc had worked for HP for much of his career. Although I never worked for HP, I always felt I belonged there, from being an avid reader of the *HP Journal*. As an electronics engineer who did instrument design for a living, I related very well to the many stories of circuit innovation in the *Journal*. Both Marc and I believed in the inspirational spirit of HP, in terms of pushing technology to the limit, but also in the camaraderie of everyone having a great time doing it. We both felt that it was the HP leadership that understood and supported that – a very rare attribute. That's why the HP story needed to be preserved and told to future generations.

Marc and I met after opening EBay accounts to bid on many pieces of vintage HP test equipment that were up for auction. All I knew at the time was that there was this one individual with the EBay ID, mmhewpack (later I would learn that was Marc's), who often outbid me, even when I placed what I considered insanely high bids. In the fall of 2003 there was a very rare HP610 UHF oscillator up for auction. This was a commercialized version of the model 'A' generator (not designed by HP) that HP manufactured for the Navy during World War II. I figured that I would be the only person to bid but placed a very high bid of \$100 just in case. At the last moment mmhewpack placed the winning bid.

I had previously bought some items from the seller and had a frequent email relationship with him. The seller liked my HP museum web page and was glad that some of his old HP items were going to a good cause. He was not happy that the other bidder beat me and thought that was inconsiderate. In emails with Marc the seller learned that Marc was also working on an HP museum, and he asked if I knew Marc and I said no. The seller suggested that I correspond with Marc and gave me his email address. I sent Marc an email with a link to my then small but growing HP museum page on my website. Marc responded to my email with his well-known great enthusiasm. He was very glad that he was not alone in his quest for a measurement museum. Marc was very apologetic about beating me out of the HP 610 but I told him that was OK – another one would show up sooner or later (and one did and I bought it). We were instantly very good friends. It was too bad that we were separated by so many thousands of miles. In coming years we would have many emails and even phone conversations.

In the spring of 2004 Marc sent me a PowerPoint presentation he was working on to make a case for a museum. I helped him Americanize the English and I could envision a day when he would be able to make the presentation. That day would come in a few years.

Marc told me he was working on a web site to be a virtual museum. I assisted him with some of the English on his site. He would set up web pages visible only to me and I would advise him of needed edits before he opened those web pages on line. It was a great help that I was very familiar with the

equipment and understood exactly what Marc was intending to say. We were quite a team. It was always a great pleasure working with Marc not just because we had a common goal but because Marc was so passionate about the goal. His passion was very inspirational. Marc's website would become the very best for historical information about HP instruments and people.

In June 2007, we got to meet in Palo Alto, to do presentations of our historical work to the HP Retired Employees Club at the HP corporate auditorium along with our mutual friend, Glenn Robb. Glenn has a fabulous website with thousands of pages of scanned vintage HP publications for free download. That event was a great one for all of us. Marc put his all into that presentation and I believe he would tell you that that was one of the greatest days of his life.

After our presentations we went to lunch at the Fishmarket on El Camino Real just down the street from HP headquarters. This was Marc's first visit to the United States and his first experience with an American restaurant. He was astounded at how good the service was – the waitress was around often to refill drinks and provide sourdough bread. Marc asked if this service was typical and I said yes. He noted that in France this kind of good service did not exist as the waiters were paid regardless of how bad the service was, and they would often turn their back if you waved to them for something.

For many years I had been searching for an extremely rare HP model 204A, which was a battery powered version of the 200B. Then one showed up on EBay. There was one bidder and I put in some bids but was still behind. At the last moment I put in the mother of all bids and still lost. Because of security issues EBay no longer showed the ID of the bidders, so I had no way to know that my competition was Marc. Had I known I would not have bid. It never occurred to me that Marc would have been interested in this odd item. I was curious as to who the other bidder was. Knowing a subtle loophole in EBay security I was able to find out a couple of weeks later that the mystery bidder was Marc. I felt bad about that as I had caused him to pay a huge price for the unit when he could have won it very cheap. I sent Marc an email and true to his great spirit he understood.

In some subsequent emails he told me that he was looking for a very rare HP model 337 monitor used by FM stations in the 1950s. It turned out that I had one that someone gave to me rather than going to the land fill. I was not particularly interested in it so I decided to give it to Marc and pay shipping to France as a way of making up for the 204A expense. The shipping cost was high but I was glad to do that for Marc. Marc proudly posted pictures of the unit on his website when it arrived as that unit completed one part of his collection. This is what friends do for each other. After Marc died, I purchased that 204A from Marc's collection for about the same high price Marc paid for it. I gladly paid the high shipping charge, so it is now back in my collection. I will think of Marc every time I see it. Marc and I may be the only people on the planet who care about such an obscure piece of HP history.

I was shocked to hear of Marc's untimely death. He had dedicated his life into making his website a fabulous place for anyone interested in HP history. I could not bear to see all of that effort vanish. I think it is a great tribute to Marc that his son and friends also wanted Marc's work preserved and I am very grateful for their support in helping me continue Marc's website now under its new URL, HPMemoryProject.org. We chose the slight change of title since that was how Marc always referred to his work. It is a shame that Marc's dream of a physical museum never happened. He was willing to donate his entire collection of classic HP test equipment to a museum even paying for substantial shipping costs. A tribute to Marc is also a tribute to the great instrument company run by Bill and Dave whose leadership concepts had a huge positive impact on the world. Many new companies adapted the

HP work culture, so that many people today benefit, even if they never worked for HP. Yet, how many companies can anyone name today that inspire the dedication Marc had? It would be a very short list.

As someone who also owns a large collection of vintage HP test equipment for the same reasons that Marc acquired his collection, I understood Marc in a special way. Losing Marc is like losing a brother. I will do all I can to continue his, or rather, OUR dream.