A Tribute to Marc Mislanghe
Hewlett-Packard History Visionary
By John Minck
July, 2014

Marc Mislanghe, Oct 10, 1946 - July 23, 2014

A Stunning Loss to HP History Archiving

When you think of measurements history, you might think of some of the scientific legends like Lord Kelvin, or perhaps Archimedes, or Galileo. But when I look at the 20th century, I would call attention to a retired French HP engineer named Marc Mislanghe. He was involved with instruments in his youth, building his own oscilloscope in the post-war period, using available surplus WWII electronics. It required a new CRT display tube, which needed to be bought new, with funds that took him a while to accumulate. He worked for the US electronic kit-maker, Heathkit, for a time, selling his time to build and test those kits for customers. But his joy was being hired by Hewlett-Packard Co. as a Support engineer and Sales engineer for a productive career.

In his retirement, Marc became enamored with the idea of a measurements museum. He was accumulating a collection of vintage HP instruments and computers, in his home basement near Biarritz, France. As a preamble to a real museum, he decided to create a virtual one, using an Internet website called HPMemory.org. He tells his technical life story in a charming history of the Curator, at this URL: http://www.hpmemory.org/ressources/resrc_curator 01.htm

As his website expanded with instrument-related content, inventories, HP instrument introductions, described by decade, massive archives of HP publications, applications and measurement processes, he happened upon several HP author memoirs. This led to his website section which began a long look at the human side of Hewlett-Packard, the HP Way, and the work culture of the pre-eminent high tech company of the 20th century. By the time of his shockingly-unexpected death, he had compiled 20 HP memoirs, which revealed the memories of a variety of authors, from division managers to the telephone operator who knew Hewlett and Packard personally.

Marc's legacy will remain forever in his Internet website: http://www.hpmemory.org
A Tribute to Marc Mislanghe  
Hewlett-Packard History Visionary

You will see his vision for his future measurements museum, sketches, promotional pamphlet, ideas for structuring some of the key instrument and computer breakthroughs of those decades. His personality is laid out in all of those pages, little animations, huge numbers of pictures. In most cases, Marc would rehabilitate an old vintage instrument, clean it up, and THEN take the picture to use in the web content. He had an almost innate sense of where to look in HP publication archives to find a picture of some company event or personality profile.

Alas, where will we find another history visionary like Marc?

Marc leaves two sons; Franck and Walter, and his long-time companion Jenny. He had one granddaughter, Marie, 10.

A Tribute to Marc Mislanghe – Hewlett-Packard History Visionary

What words come to mind when I think of Marc Mislanghe?

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. He reported that EVERY DAY, up to 1300 people visited his website, for more than a few minutes. 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.

John Minck  
Palo Alto, CA  
July, 2014