

## K4TWJ, W2FMI . . . and a Message for the Rest of Us

I am writing this on January 20th, a little more than a week after the earthquake in Haiti and the day that our good friend and longtime colleague, Dave Ingram, K4TWJ, became a Silent Key. Dave has been a fixture on the pages of *CQ* for nearly 30 years. His byline first appeared on an antenna review back in 1981. The following year, he began writing an amateur television column called “The World of Video.” Over the years, Dave broadened the column’s focus and it transformed into “The World of Ideas,” his signature monthly column. For the past decade, Dave has also been our QRP Editor and anchored the bi-monthly “How it Works” column. (This month’s columns were off to the printer before Dave’s passing.)

Dave suffered a massive heart attack on New Year’s Eve, but appeared to be recovering steadily if slowly. At one point, he was even able to enjoy some of the many cards that well-wishers had sent him at the hospital. But it seems that the damage to his heart was just too great, and Dave slipped away in the early morning hours today, with Sandy, WB4OEE, his wife of 47 years, by his side.

Anyone who ever met Dave came away amazed at the amount of energy and enthusiasm that he seemed to just radiate, especially for anything that had to do with ham radio. The law of conservation of energy says that energy may neither be created nor destroyed, so that means that in Dave’s absence, there is now a tremendous amount of ham-radio-focused energy floating around, waiting for others of us to harness it and put it to use to promote all of the wonderful things about our hobby. Dave’s favorites, of course, were QRP, CW, code keys, and projects—especially tube-based projects. And he had enough energy and enthusiasm for 100 “normal” hams, so feel free to make some of that energy your own, and use it to show your fellow hams and others just what it is that makes your favorite part of ham radio so special. No need to worry about that energy supply running out . . . and it will be a fitting tribute to Dave as well.

### “From Phys. Ed. to Physics”

Dave is the fourth ham radio friend I’ve lost in the last few months. Two were personal (non-*CQ*) friends, but the other is someone whose name and callsign graced these pages many times: Jerry Sevick, W2FMI. Jerry was “the man” when it came to transmission line transformers, also known as baluns and ununs, and he wrote several books on the topic for us and other publishers. His *Understanding, Building and Using Baluns and Ununs* and *The Short Vertical Antenna* continue to be among our most popular titles. Those books got their start as a series of articles on the topic that ran here in *CQ* in the 1980s. Jerry was 90 when he became a Silent Key last fall, but had remained active on the air nearly to the end. He was a regular check-in on his local club’s weekly 2-meter net until about two weeks before his passing.

Jerry’s story illustrates the power of ham radio to change lives. He grew up in a working-class family in Detroit, where he excelled in athletics (he turned down an offer to play for the Detroit Lions football team) and planned to become a Phys. Ed. teacher and high school coach. But after joining the Army Air Corps during World War II, the fact that he had a ham license got him sent off to study a newfangled device called radar at a little college in Massachusetts called Harvard. After the war,

Jerry realized it was possible for a working-class kid from Detroit to have a career in science and technology. He returned to his alma mater, Wayne State University in Michigan, to get a Master’s degree in physics, followed by a Ph.D. from Harvard, all paid for by the G. I. Bill.

He taught briefly at Wayne State, did a stint as a TV weatherman in the mid-1950s, and then was hired by Bell Laboratories to work on transistors and semiconductor reliability. In his spare time, he worked on antennas, transmission lines, and transmission-line transformers, taking advantage of the test equipment available at work to make measurements.

“Although this work was outside of my responsibility,” he wrote in a memoir titled *From Phys. Ed. to Physics*, “Bell Labs was glad to measure my transformers because they thought of it as good science.” Jerry retired from Bell Labs in 1984 as Director of Technical Relations, after which he began writing and publishing his books for hams. Jerry’s depth of knowledge in his very specialized area of expertise will be missed as much as Dave’s broader enthusiasm for all things relating to ham radio.

### Devastation in Haiti

Just over a week ago, a massive earthquake shook Haiti and its capital city, Port-au-Prince. Early indications are that over 100,000 lives may have been lost. As soon as the news of the quake became known, hams all over the U.S. and around the Caribbean went into “disaster mode,” monitoring the bands for any possible word from the affected area. Some ham radio activity was reported (see box in this month’s Public Service column), but Haiti has very few hams to begin with, so there has not been much. We will be following the story and if there is more to report in the coming weeks, K16SN will cover it in his April column.

### A Matter of Perspective

Reflecting on these losses, both personal and communal (be it the ham radio community or the world community), and on the fragility of life, should make us pause to take a look at our own priorities and try to put things in their proper perspective.

The bottom line is that life is short and unpredictable. It can change dramatically in a matter of seconds. Are we making the best use of whatever time we are given? Since this is a hobby magazine, it is appropriate to ponder whether we are using our leisure time to fully enjoy our hobbies or wasting much of that time quibbling with each other over matters that, in the long run, are of little importance? Are we trying to make sure that we *have* some leisure time and family time blocked into our always-busy schedules? An unknown writer once remarked that “No man on his deathbed ever looked up into the eyes of his family and friends and said, ‘I wish I’d spent more time at the office.’”

Let us honor the memories of people like Dave and Jerry\* by enjoying our hobby to the maximum, and by making it a source of lifetime learning and accomplishment, and most of all, fun. Dave and Jerry, may peace be with you and may your memories be a blessing to all who knew you. We will greatly miss you both. 73, W2VU

*\*Dave’s family requests that donations in his memory be made to the American Heart Association. Jerry’s family has asked that those wishing to make contributions in his memory direct them to their local YMCA, another of Jerry’s long-time loves.*

\*e-mail: <w2vu@cq-amateur-radio.com>