

CHARLIE'S WHISTLE

By

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Springtime is the time of renewal. Flowers, trees, lawns and most all living things restart their annual cycle in their manner of blooming, budding or otherwise letting us know that nature has called them into action once again. Christians celebrate the resurrection of their Savior and everyone celebrates the renewal of their attributes in which they all take pride and comfort.

With springtime upon us now and the forecast of a potentially strong sunspot cycle about to launch later this year, our friend Charlie is nearly as excited as a new ham full of great expectations before him. Warm antenna weather, long days, promise of round the clock DX on many bands, exciting 6 meter openings and new DX created for us all to work have Charlie feeling new excitement. It's a wonderful time of year, indeed.

On Easter Sunday morning, Mary and Charlie heard their pastor remind them to carry the message of resurrection with them throughout the year. We are reborn every day that we wake to see a new sunrise. We must not take this daily gift for granted but rather see it as an opportunity to renew our lives and do God's work in whatever manner it may be presented to us.

While sitting there absorbing their pastor's words, Charlie subconsciously reflected upon his life as an engineer, husband, parent and DXer. He's understandably proud of his life and knows that he hasn't wasted any of his daily gifts. He has always worked hard, always trying to use his skills to do the best he was capable of doing. Now that he's in retirement, much of his time is spent helping others to learn the joy of being a DXer. He has coached dozens of new hams over the years and been proud of every one of them and their accomplishments.

Probably his favorite new ham was young Brian who started his ham career at the age of about 15 while still a high school student. Charlie stays in touch with Brian who is now working as an advanced signal processing engineer while finishing his thesis for his Doctorate degree. Charlie and Mary are very proud of Brian, nearly as much as his parents. They have wonderful and successful children of their own, of course but Brian is just a special kid.

Of course, they are very pleased with Brian's achievements at MIT in earning his SB, MS and PhD degrees and as an Amateur by earning his Extra class ticket while still a high school student, but Charlie is most proud of the fact that along the way, Brian has made time to encourage his colleagues that he Elmered along the way to follow his example and even become Elmers themselves. Along the nearly six decades that Charlie has been an Amateur, he has Elmered dozens of hams of all ages and always has made a point to them to reach out to help others by sharing their skills and knowledge. It may have been a bit more essential in past years when the code exam was 20 words per minute but passing their knowledge down the line is absolutely essential. Despite the fact that demonstration

of code proficiency is not a test requirement any longer, Charlie personally feels very strongly that CW is an essential mode of communication. No other mode is as simple and spectrum efficient to transmit or receive, reliable through marginal band conditions or as language blind as CW. It truly is a universal language in the world and reliable to get the message through when all else has failed. Becoming proficient in using code is very similar to the manner used in becoming a violin artist performing at Carnegie Hall; practice, practice, practice.

Brian is enthused about knowing code and has recommended regular CW practice amongst his friends in the same way Charlie always encourages him to follow his regular practice, even now years after he passed his FCC test. Brian will absolutely never forget how he felt when he passed his 20 wpm code test at the VE session about 15 years ago. He was so thrilled and happy to pass but more to see Charlie's pride in what he had done. The accomplishment and approval from his mentor was more than he can explain. Whenever he and Charlie see one another, it's easy to see the special and well earned respect they have for one another.

Brian learned more than code from Charlie. He learned how to be a professional and a leader among his peers. He also learned how to share his knowledge. That was the example that Charlie set for him. Charlie saw his potential and would settle for nothing less from him.

Keeping these skills and abilities alive and refreshed within the work force and our Amateur fraternity is essential. None of us must ever become apathetic and assume that the other guy will do it. This is our duty and our obligation. The next generation deserves the best and we can deliver it to them.