
LB Cebik - My Mentor, My Friend Bob Cerreto, WA1FXT

INTRODUCTION

To discuss LB as a mentor here would repeat the same words that have been spoken and are now being spoken by many of the people LB helped. If you ever sought LB's help then you all know the words to say. Surely, his gifts and talents were and are shared with all of us. LB gave to all of us everything that was given to him. LB's hope and philosophy was for each and every one of you was to pass the same knowledge on to others in the same passionate, humble, and kindly manner. So, the next time you can help someone with a technical problem, remember how LB helped you. Pass the knowledge on with humbleness and unbounded enthusiasm.

At some point during our first project together, LB and I discussed how we should combine our collective thoughts into one paper for publication. During that discussion, we both agreed on a format and that even though we both had different writing styles, the paper should look homogeneous. Apparently, LB had read my compulsive EMAILS very carefully and noticed we were very different people! LB said to me, " You can write the great human interest story about this project and working with LB when I am gone. Maybe you can get *antenneX* to publish it. I just happen to know the Technical editor." So, with that bit of LB Cebik humor we wrote our first paper together. Now LB, I get the chance to write that "human interest" story. I hope this bit of sharing has some value for all who read.



IN THE BEGINNING

Like many people, my relationship with LB started with attending his seminar presentation at an Amateur radio convention in Dayton Ohio. We purchased a CD of his web site and had LB sign our copy of "Basic Antenna Modeling". Sometime during that seminar, LB and I talked about our home state in Connecticut and our goals within the hobby. LB was the perfect gentleman, modest, and very easy to talk to. His manner left you feeling that you were his friend and answered all antenna related questions as if each one of them was very important. It was easy to notice the quiet enthusiasm and his desire to share his vast knowledge.

Over the next two years I learned about modeling and constructed some antennas based on LB'S web site. There were many questions asked and LB answered all of them in a clear, patient, and understandable manner. However, LB always left me with a challenge. Like the true teacher that he was, LB usually gave me "homework" assignments in order to discover more knowledge on my own.

It was during a question/answer/discussion session on Cubical Quads that LB sent me a preview of a new quad design. The design was a 12M/17M, single feed and two-element affair. The antenna looked very intriguing and a physical challenge to build. By then, LB knew that I loved challenges. So, he "dared" me to build it and asked me to help him prove the modeling numbers and provide a practical project for everyone. Since it was the end of the outdoor antenna-building season, the project spread across six months.

We began referring to the project as the “Whenever Quad”. We exchanged many ideas about construction. LB never once threw his ideas at me as the only way to accomplish our goal. Our ideas, though sometimes very different, never seem to clash always seemed to meld. LB knew exactly how to help grow one’s ideas and patiently guided the efforts with his suggested improvements. His skillful, patient and selfless tutoring left me with knowledge and a sense of self accomplishment. This touched my heart deeply.

THE RELATIONSHIP GROWS

We began to get to know each other on a more personal level. LB’s sense of humor and his constant teasing me about my over building methods kept the project a barrel of fun. The prototype Quad boom was fabricated from welded steel members. I claimed this was needed for the tough Lake Erie winters. LB said I was too worried about tornadoes and predicted the tower would fail long before the indestructible Quad.

There were “non antenna related” EMAILS that emerged during the first project. LB’s dad was a tool designer. My dad was a tool and die maker. We talked about our love for old tools and the story their wear marks told.

We all know how vast LB’s knowledge base was. I wonder how many knew how deep his feelings were. While being a very strong man, LB was also a very sensitive man. His passions for the simpler stuff of life brought you very close to him. We talked of homemade gifts in homemade boxes, arts and crafts creations from our life partners, the value of expressing your feelings through music, photography and the sharing of talents with others. LB loved nature and photography. We shared some of his photos of flowers and critters in his yard. If you were to see his pictures, you would see LB’s heart. The subject matter, composition, sensitivity, and technical accuracy reflected LB’s heart and mind.

LB’s favorite holiday was Christmas. Christmas was very special for LB. My wife and I surprised LB with a handmade Pen and Pencil set. We corresponded throughout the holidays and spoke of personal feelings. LB always included notes to my wife Judith and we sent photos our activities in and around the antenna lab. His eye for detail always generated comments about the extensive tool collection hanging on the walls of the shop. LB was a superb craftsman and we both shared a passionate desire to use our hands. This is when LB met my granddaughter who is my faithful 5-year old lab assistant. His EMAILS always had some words for her and how Pappa should take care of her curious nature.

THE PROJECTS GROW

We successfully finished that “Whenever Quad” in spring after a winter long EMAIL exchange. LB then totally surprised me by asking if I would co-author a paper with him. We published that paper and I thought the paper would be a once in a lifetime partnership. I could not have been more wrong.

We continued to correspond and managed one of several personal visits to his home. After shaking hands, the first thing LB did was to present me with his prototype of the 2M OWA antenna. LB was more than just generous with his knowledge. He also gave away many of his projects. We talked so much that day; I went home with a slight sore throat! The subject matter ranged from politics to old architecture in Connecticut, tool techniques, PC software, CW stories, and many others. I had the feeling that if we lived

closer to each other, we would be working in his lab or mine chiding each other and just having great fun finding ways to share his work.

Shortly after I returned to Ohio, I received an EMAIL from LB asking how the trip home was. He was a very caring person. We continued our EMAIL correspondence punctuated with telephone calls. LB would keep me abreast of his current projects and I did the same with mine. Some of my projects were non-antenna related. LB was always the good and knowledgeable sounding board no matter what the project was. He also served as an excellent sounding board for everyday life experiences. His warmth always removed the miles between us.

AS THE WHEEL TURNS

As the EMAILS were passed, LB would hint about a challenging new idea he had. He would not plainly ask, "Hey Bob, how would you like to help me with". Instead he would present the initial idea, ask for thoughts, and make very broad hints pointing toward a new construction project. LB would hint, prod and tease until I finally would say, "OK, LB, do you or do you not want to do this project together". Of course, the answer was "yes" and his way to say "yes" was to start by sending me an EZNEC file and then listen to my 1000 ways to build the new idea. I must have driven him batty with all the insane and sane ideas. But, LB was patient and said, "I knew you would like this one, because it is a difficult one." Thus, began the "New Spin on the Big Wheel" paper.

The first prototype wheel was very time consuming. We both were still trying to sort out how this geometry worked and could be explained. The initial test results of the first prototype showed that it would be very difficult for the average antenna builder to reproduce. Since one of the main goals was to make this an easy antenna to build we were a bit discouraged. But, the discouragement served as a catalyst to persevere until we fully understood how this antenna worked. I guess we were both are a bit stubborn.

The answer to our construction dilemma came to LB as we talked about dipoles and the history of the original design. We changed the location of the feed points and everything else fell into place. As I was constructing the second prototype, LB decided he would build another version of the array. This led to more fun teasing each other about who had the prettiest antenna. Since my version had curves, it became known as "Sophia". LB's version was plain and angular. So LB's antenna became "Olive Oyl". You can just imagine the humor that appeared after we named the antennas. LB's photos were quite professional. I always included silly photos with my correspondence such as Judith or the granddaughter wearing the new array like a new hat. Or me, dancing with Sophia while trying to bend her into shape! We had great fun and the net result was a high performance, horizontally polarized 2M array easy for the average ham to build.

ROLLING ON

The Big Wheel project was no sooner finished than LB presented another challenging antenna project. After the modeling was done and understood, we set out building two different versions. Again, the EMAILS flew, the good-natured teasing began and we were back building another project. More importantly, we were building an even more solid friendship. We had reached the prototype testing stage when the EMAILS abruptly stopped. This was not like LB. He always made sure he kept me busy with another "dare" or refinements on the latest thought. The news that followed was devastating! We all had lost our friend and I lost my brother.

CONCLUDING

This is but a small glimpse of working with LB. LB had very prolific and productive mind and one and all could probably write many more words about him. Those words would fill many volumes. However, through his own writing and correspondence, it is obvious to all who read them what kind of man LB Cebik is. I was one of the lucky ones who happened to know what he was like on a personal level. I shall miss his physical presence and my heart will always hear his voice each time I work in my lab or shop with another friend. His subtle sense of humor and good natured teasing no longer brightens my day. He has taught me to brighten other friend's days by sharing a project and each other.

The knowledge LB gave to me does not compare to the life lessons he gave me. His gentle caring for the simple things of life enables one's eyes to see past any of the immediate and temporary negative aspects of life. LB is a shining example of what we all should strive to be.

Some people may view LB Cebik as a very complicated man. Beyond all philosophies, beliefs and assumptions, LB wanted to be viewed as a very simple man. LB's epitaph can be paraphrased from his simple motto:

LB Learned, LB Taught, LB Served

All of his friends near and far can add a few more phrases:

LB Loved, LB Shared, LB Lived

So LB, what is our next project?!! See you soon LB. I hear you now.

73 and GN LB, Bob WA1FXT -30- (end of transmission)

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF AUTHOR



Bob Cerreto, WA1FXT is a Senior Engineer with a major DC Power Systems Supplier. He has spent most of his career in the Telephony Business Segment holding various engineering positions.

Bob has also coordinated and managed the development and implementation of the original Training Department and associated programs for his employer. Most of the training programs have dealt with internal engineering and field engineering. His hobbies include Amateur Radio, woodworking, backpacking, and canoeing adventures.

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