

Mark Mattson May He Rest in Peace

from John Fair, read at Memorial service November 5th 2016

Many of you were closer to Mark and knew him a lot better than I did. But I thought I might share my limited view of a good man to add to the collective memories being shared today. I moved to Erie as a retired person needing help with computer software and hardware and fortunately I found the Computer Users of Erie also known as CUE. At those early meetings one club member stood out to me: a big guy with a strong voice, gruff, always very opinionated but someone who knew more about computer software and hardware than I could ever hope to know. To put it bluntly, Mark intimidated me.

He edited the club's very professional newsletter and was one of a small group that ran the club. Everyone seemed to defer to his expertise. But this creative technical guru had his hot buttons. He really didn't appreciate volunteers who didn't take their responsibilities seriously. Or folks who didn't communicate with him as they should. But, if you wanted to really get him started just mention that you used Norton as your antivirus software. I only made that mistake once, but heard the lecture repeatedly. "Junk! Just junk! It doesn't work!"

I didn't see Mark's softer side until years later. I don't know if it was Tanya's influence changing Mark, me understanding him better, or both. While the grouchy bear surfaced on occasion, folks in our club understood that his selfless contributions far outweighed a few harsh words. And pain makes anyone grouchy on occasion. Lord knows Mark suffered through more than his share of pain.

I can't stress enough what Mark's contributions meant to Computer Users of Erie. Our newsletter "Horizons" was Mark's masterpiece. We were all very proud of it. This was a common sight at our General Meeting: issues from the past several years are laid out on tables with members and prospective members strolling along and picking up issues that interest them, returning to

their seats and pouring over some of the content. Mark's newsletter was a centerpiece for attracting new members to our club. Our parent national organization, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, recognized Mark's work with a first place award – best newsletter in the nation one year and in the top 3 other years. I still marvel that our award winning publication was created for so many years by a man who was legally blind.

Mark scrutinized and corrected grammar and punctuation in every article sent to him. He taught me that in modern printing there is only one space after the period before the next sentence. Two spaces was an anachronism which died with the typewriter. Sadly, Mark, some habits are just too ingrained to correct. I learned to touch type over 50 years ago. Every period in this text is followed by two spaces.

If you had a computer problem Mark was willing to take the time to fix it. Just drop your machine off at his house and give him a few weeks. He understood the insides of a computer and could diagnose and fix it. He knew how to fix software and operating system problems as well. What a mind!

In a small way CUE tried to express our admiration and gratitude for all he meant to the club with a plaque given to Mark days before his passing. When Tanya advised the club of Mark's death, she quickly received over 20 email responses conveying condolences and prayers from club members. They are both loved. Mark, buddy, we will all miss you. May you rest in peace.