

# WILSE MORGAN WX7P SK

1932 – June 13, 2013

I have known Wilse Morgan, W6PVF, KL7CQ and WX7P, since 1961 and he was without a doubt the most interesting person I have ever had the privileged of meeting. I doubt that most first meetings are long remembered, but I remember my first meeting with Wilse. We both were recent graduates newly employed by FAA, but in different offices. He told me what a great job I had and gave me some friendly advice on how to get ahead in the FAA, "Don't rock the boat". He was right on both counts.

Witse had a imposing physical stature and pleasant but dominating personality. He was a great salesman and deal maker. He would take on any challenge he believed in and would usually accomplish it. Soon after I met Wilse I made a big mistake and said to Wilse, "maybe we should make printed circuit boards and sell them to the hams." Within a few months he had taken over my garage, spare bedroom and refrigerator and we were in business. It was hard to say no to Wilse.



*Witse when I first met him in about 1961.*

As you can imagine that situation didn't set well with the XYL and my participation the business didn't last long. However, Wilse found a way to keep the business growing and he turned it into thriving business.

Witse was also the most ardent believer in ham radio that I have ever met. It ran in his veins. When I first visited Wilse at his home, his ham station was a 19 inch D rack installed in the middle of the apartment living room. Quite an accomplishment for a newly wed I thought, but my XYL wasn't impressed.

Witse and I worked together as Electronic Engineers in FAA starting in 1961. Probably the biggest adventure we had was after the 1964 flood in the Northern California which washed out the all the bridges to Eureka, Crescent City and Arcata. For almost 2 month all supplies had to come to the area by air. The Arcata airport didn't have a control tower or air traffic control. Wilse and I volunteered to be part of a team to establish a temporary control tower at the Arcata Flight Service Station. We flew down to the Arcata in a FAA flight inspection DC-3 and installed portable Gonset Transceivers for the volunteer Air Traffic Controllers. After a week or so of 16 hour days we had installed remote transmitter receiver sites and modified the Flight Service Station with additional frequencies and operating positions for air traffic control.

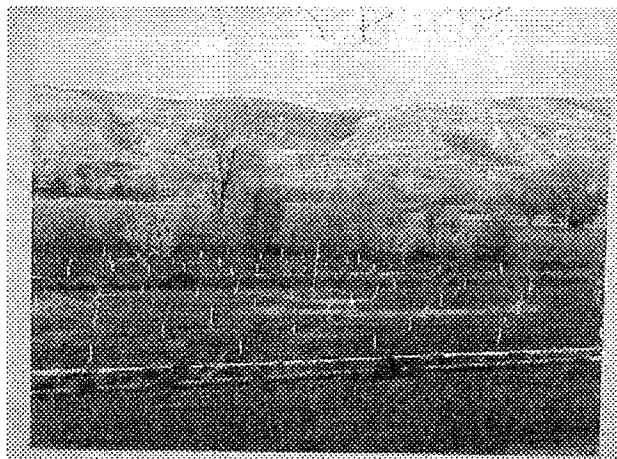
Late one evening after a long 16 hour day one of the crew members wanted to stop for a beer before we went back to the motel. We found a bar and proceeded to order. Wilse had a few vices but not smoking or drinking so I was curious about what he would order. He proceeded to give the bartender a list of at least 10 ingredients for his drink the last of which was a twist of lime, and a shot of grenadine. After a lot of searching the bartender told Wilse they were out of grenadine. After some hassle, Wilse agreed it was OK to leave it out. The bartender asked what kind of liquor Wilse wanted and he said none. The bartender lost his mind for a few minutes, but Wilse got his drink and we all had a good laugh.

After Wilse quit FAA and moved to Alaska I didn't see him on a regular basis but we always kept in touch. I spent two weeks on a float trip with Wilse in Alaska in 1976 in a trip of a lifetime. Fishing was never the same for me after that trip as I had switched sides. I was now rooting for the fish.

After Wilse retired in about 1989, we saw a lot more of each other. And something wonderful happened to him. He had a new wife, Gimmie, which I believe was the best thing that ever happened to him. They moved to Camp Verde, Arizona, and purchased a small farm on the Verde River. My XYL Barbara and I decided that Mesa, AZ, about 70 miles south of Camp Verde would be our winter home, so now we had the opportunity to see Wilse and Gimmie on a regular basis.

After I retired in 1990, we camped on their farm in our motor home almost every year on our way to or from AZ. They named it "Reo Verde Farm". It was about 50 yards from the Verde River. They built a home, planted orchards, garlic, and much more. The time we spent with Wilse, Gimmie and QSO four wheeling or following them around for a week was the best. During this time Wilse was still a very active ham but his farming came first.

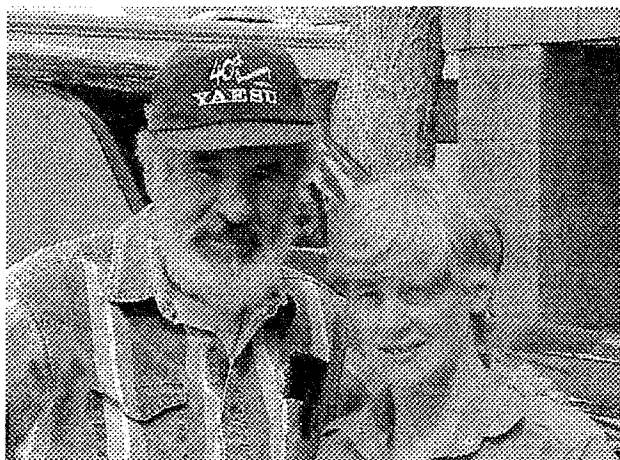
I know these were very happy and busy years for Wilse and Gimmie. They moved their honey business down from Alaska, and had bee hives all over Arizona. They sent semi truck loads of bee hives every year to pollinate the almond crops in California. They turned that small farm into a paradise, (see the young orchard below) raised garlic, chickens, asparagus, peaches, kiwi, and more than I can remember. They opened a country store in Camp Verde, and installed a huge hot house for growing hydroponic tomatoes year round which they sold for healthy premium.



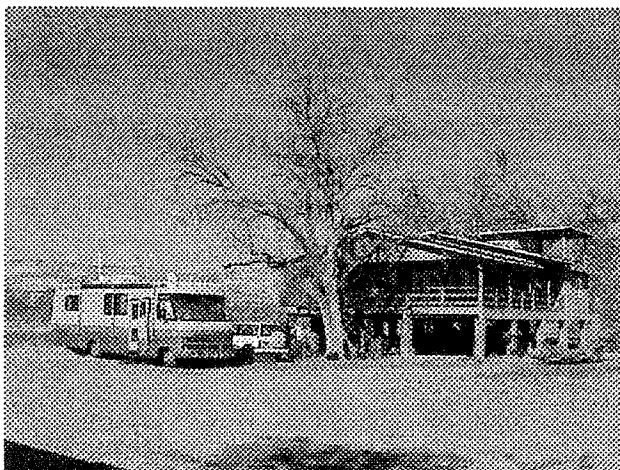
*Reo Verde Farm in Camp Verde shortly after they purchased the property and planted the orchard.*



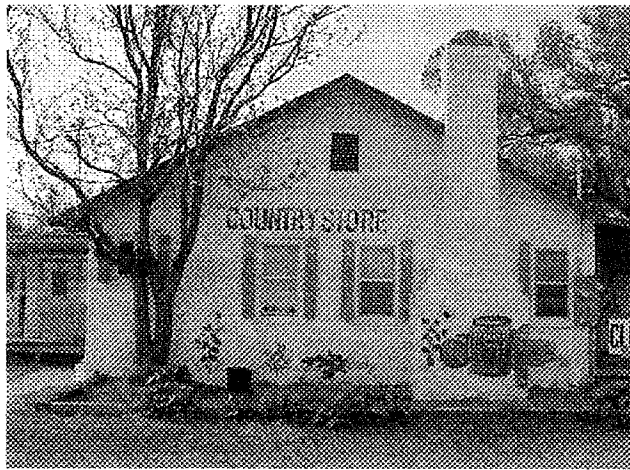
*One of my favorite pictures. (1995?)*



*Another one.*



*They built this house on the Verde River on stilts because it was in the flood plane. In the Verde River I caught the biggest catfish ever, up to 10 lbs.*



*Their country store in Camp Verde*

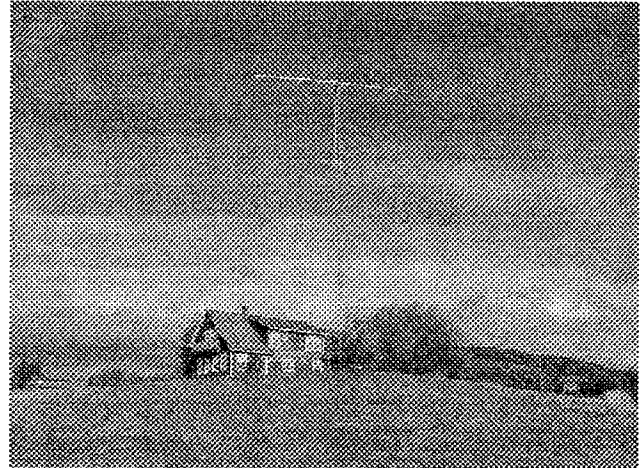


*Inside view of the hot house of newly planted hydroponic tomatoes that grew without soil in a nutrient rich bag. The tomatoes were awesome.*



*Ham radio even influenced the names of their pets. This is QSO, my favorite pet ever. A skipper key breed that was smart as a whip. According to Wilse QSO could read the freeway signs and let them know when they got close to the freeway turn off. QSO and Wilse had a common trait. Once you were their friend, you were always their friend.*

The hard work and hot sun in Arizona finally got to Wilse and Gimmie, and they decided to really retire and moved to Rice, Washington. I only visited them twice in their new beautiful home and ideal ham radio location. It was about everything a ham could ask for and Wilse soon had a contest station on the air. He has made lots of improvements since I saw it. Wilse believed in building things well. His fence posts on the farm were railroad ties, Wilse strong like everything he built.



*This is a view of the tall tower with a log periodic antenna. Several more towers and antennas have gone up since I took this picture in about 2006.*

Witse Morgan, WX7P, was a ham's ham. His ham radio accomplishments are well documented on the internet. He was an advocate of everything that is good about ham radio. I think the mold has been broken and there will never be an equal to Wilse. He mentored too many new hams to count, was active in every ham club he lived near, and was ham radios best friend. I expect that if you ever met Wilse, you would remember him the rest of your life. He truly was unforgettable.

During Wilse's battle with cancer over the past several years, Gimmie was with him every step of the way. I doubt that Wilse would believe his marriage was made in heaven, but I'm sure it was. Angels aren't that plentiful and Wilse was surely given one. My prayers are with Gimmie during these tough times. Gimmie is strong and she will do well. And the ham community will be with her.

Earl Palmer, N7EP, a friend of Wilse who will never forget him. 6-19-2013