

Wireless Pioneers, Now Silent.

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I was saddened to read in May, 2004, that Byron Goodman, W1DX, had died at age 93. "By" was a wonderfully interesting fellow who contributed greatly to amateur radio. My connections to By were significant, going back to my high school years. He was my first Connecticut contact in 1956 on the 40M CW band, and his QSL card would be found in my photos from that era. It was used as my entry for both WAS and DXCC. I later worked By in 1988 on 10M CW, a favorite that he pioneered.

I first met By in person during a business trip to the east coast in 1972. I had attended the IEEE International Electron Devices Meeting in Washington, DC, and then flew up to Newington, Connecticut to visit with Doug and Jean DeMaw for a few days. I met many of the folks at ARRL in that visit, plus a few that had, by then, retired from the League. This included By who came over to Doug's house for a memorable evening of discussions about receivers, CW, SSB, QRP, and other related radio things.



Left to right: W1FB, W7ZOI, and W1DX. (W1CCK photo.)

I had first met Doug through correspondence about direct conversion receivers. Doug had edited a November 1968 QST paper that I had written with W7WKR on the subject. He then built some DC receiver designs of his own using a variety of product detectors. Doug stayed with us here in Oregon during a League business trip, allowing a first "eyeball" meeting. He had a clear and significant impact on my life. We eventually wrote a book (SSD) together, as well as one QST article, along with informal chats too

numerous to summarize concerning all of amateur radio. These chats started during the early to mid 1970s when we exchanged tape recordings. We also had several QSOs on the air, mostly on CW. On-the-air chats were always difficult, especially on phone, for there were many folks all too anxious to break in so they could work Doug. Doug died of leukemia in September, 1997, at age 71.

Byron's influence is not as obvious. Like many, I read his early QST articles about SSB. I was a high school student at the time and understood little that I read. Still, SSB was intriguing. I continue to regret not having built a SSB station at that time, just to experience the excitement of the pioneering atmosphere that went with it. By's articles were a good introduction to some basic modulation ideas, and to the concept that a signal could be viewed in either the time or frequency domains. My copy of the 1954 ARRL compendium "Single Sideband for the Radio Amateur" still sits in my library.

It was some of Byron's receiver work that I found most exciting. One of his QST papers from the mid 1950s era was titled "What's Wrong with Our Present Receivers?" (QST, p11, January, 1957.) The paper suggested obtaining selectivity as early (with regard to gain) as possible in a receiver. This yields optimum receiver dynamic range. This paper created quite a stir in our local radio club and formed the basis for at least one homebrew receiver, this by an old friend & "Elmer," Bill Dozer, W7WJR (SK.) Byron used some of the thoughts from that paper to guide later receivers that he built and described in QST. This Goodman paper had a significant impact on my own receiver work in following years.

Both of these fellows are missed. We continue to celebrate their contributions.