

LINE OF SIGHT

A Message from the Editor

Are You Someone's Hero?

Sometimes on our life's journey we experience a set of circumstances that lead to a wonderful conclusion. Such was the case for my wife, Carol, W6CL, and me as we journeyed home from the AMSAT Symposium this October.

On our trip home we were scheduled on a flight out of Denver that was overbooked. We volunteered to be bumped and subsequently ended up on the next Tulsa-bound flight, which necessitated our having to go to a new departure gate.

After arriving at the gate, we sat down and immediately began overhearing a conversation between two men behind us. One man was being friendly and asking the other man why he also was traveling to Spokane, Washington. The other man stated that he was scheduled to give a lecture at a community college on Tuesday on repairing the Hubble telescope while in space.

The mention of that topic caught the attention of both Carol and me. I turned around and looked at the man who was talking about his being an astronaut and then asked him his name. He told me who he was: Dr. Story Musgrave. I identified myself as an amateur radio operator and then told him that Carol and I were on our way home from a symposium in San Francisco where we had met astronaut Bill McArthur. I then asked him if he was a ham radio operator, because, as we know, almost all U.S. astronauts today do obtain their ham radio licenses.

Dr. Musgrave stated that while he was not a ham radio operator, he had flown on STS 51F with Tony England, WØORE, a name that immediately resonated with Carol and me because Tony is a hero in the ham radio community for being the second ham radio operator to communicate from space (the first was Owen Garriott, W5LFL).

During our all-too-brief conversation, Dr. Musgrave was an extremely gracious and unassuming person. As it is, he is one of the most accomplished astronauts, having flown on six missions, including each of the shuttles, during his 30-year

career with NASA. Along with being a very fancy mechanic, he is also a surgeon and a poet, to name just a few of his accomplishments.

Even so, as with so many other astronauts, Dr. Musgrave recognizes that he has taken on hero status in the hearts of so many of us around the world. As such, he patiently takes time to engage in conversations with total strangers. Such was the case with Carol and me.

This was also the case with astronaut Bill McArthur. When we met Bill at the symposium, he could not have been more gracious to us and to the others with whom he conversed over the weekend.

In a conversation I had with Lou McFadin, W5DID, while at the symposium, he told me that he was so glad that Bill was a part of the symposium because he had been telling people about Bill's gracious manner for a long time. He stated that now others could see Bill's unassuming manner for themselves. I readily agreed with Lou's assessment of Bill.

Dr. Musgrave and Bill are true heroes because of their accomplishments. More than their accomplishments, however, they share their heroic adventures with young people by being involved with youth and young adults.

All of this commentary about Dr. Musgrave and Bill McArthur is leading me to ask my opening question: Are you somebody's hero?

My work as a United Methodist minister has reinforced for me the fact that we are living in a world that often is lacking in true heroes and role models for our children. Too often, today's children are products of broken and dysfunctional homes. As a result, these children know very few adults who serve as role models, let alone heroes.

This void of heroes has to be filled in some way. Unfortunately, too often this void is filled by those of less than desirable reputations, which only exacerbates these children's situations.

Here is where we as hams need to step in as role models and heroes for those children with whom we can have a posi-

tive influence. We can become these role models and heroes through a variety of different journeys. The easiest way is to invite children and youth to our amateur radio club meetings.

A more involved commitment may be by way of volunteering at a local school. For example, your school might have an opportunity where you can have lunch with one or more of the students via a program called "lunch buddies." You might also volunteer to be a teacher's aide for a science teacher.

Again, as a minister, I would also encourage those of you who are involved in your place of worship to volunteer to work with your youth department. Your priest, minister, or rabbi would be most pleasantly surprised to know of your interest in working with your congregation's youth.

If your interest is in small satellites, you might also be interested in volunteering for a program that professor Bob Twiggs, KE6QMD, announced at the AMSAT Symposium. Bob spoke of Stanford University's Small Satellite Program and how it has received a grant of \$500,000 to be spent over the next three years in developing and nurturing graduate students in their work on small satellites. Bob indicated that he will be needing mentors from around the country to work with these students and that it is possible to receive travel remuneration for your work as a mentor. If you are interested in assisting Bob, then contact him at <bob.twiggs@standford.edu>.

Few of us can be heroes on the level of Dr. Musgrave or Bill McArthur. However, each of us can answer our individual calling to be a hero to someone—or even to a number of young people. Therefore, I urge each of us to consider just how we might be that special hero to those whom we can influence.

If you have a story to tell about being a hero to some young people, please let me know about it. If it has a VHF spin to it, you might find it published in a future issue of this, your magazine.

Until the next issue... 73 de Joe, N6CL