

## W3JS SK

The process of sharing the sad news that Nat Boonin, W3JS, had died was numbing. Even more awakening was the notice that appeared in the Tuesday, September 19 issues of The Philadelphia Inquirer and its sister paper, The Philadelphia Daily News.

NATHANIEL BOONIN, of Newtown Square, September 17, 2006, husband of Rose (nee Kashoff), father of Dr. Alan Boonin and his fiance Kristin Degnan, and Deborah Dillon and her husband Steve, brother of Miriam Davidon; also survived by his grandchildren Allison and Daniel. Relatives and friends are invited to his services Thursday, 12:30 PM. JOSEPH LEVINE AND SON MEMORIAL CHAPELS (WEST), 2811 West Chester Pike, Broomall PA. Int. private. The family respectfully requests that contributions in his memory be made to the Tyler Arboretum, 515 Painter Road, Media, PA 19063.

As a credit to the person whose life was being celebrated on Thursday, September 21, and equally a credit to his Amateur Radio friends, the funeral service for the Delaware Valley's Nat Boonin, W3JS, was both a happy and emotional gathering. The simple, but moving collections of reflections by family and Amateur Radio associates provided a sharing of experiences between the two entities and other attendees.

The tone for the afternoon of shared experiences began with Nat's brother. During his remembrances, a faithful overview of both skills and traits helped provide a foundation for the others that followed.

As the afternoon progressed, the attendees soon learned that the published Death Notice told only a small, abbreviated snippet of the many accomplishments and interests that were shared during the Funeral Service.

The first of the family members was Nat's brother. The brotherly love and pride fostered a wonderful collection of personal and family reflections. There were items that the humility of our W3JS would never have become known had this responsibility been that of Nat.

One of the early collections of successes shared by his brother told of Nat's automotive ability. Following this initial collection of these shared, humorous discoveries, the attendees discovered how little they really knew about the quiet, well-focused Nat Boonin. He seemed to be very comfortable at living a life that was being unraveled as being years of understated experiences.

As the family memories were very candidly shared by Alan Boonin, MD, the older of the two children of Nat and Rose, it was soon seen that the influences of the father were well received by his son. The love of cars grew one big leap when Dr. Boonin explained that this inherited love of cars went to a love of racing. This love of cars has resulted in a certification permitting the upstate physician to participate in racing as well as surgery.

The father-to-son transfer also embraced another of the areas of the Nat Boonin expertise. While his son's Amateur Radio license has expired, at one time there were two generations of Boonin Ham Radio operators.

The memories of a Debbie, the younger Nat and Rose offspring added softer memories. It was evident that her father also provided interests and skills that have vaulted the gender gap. She also recognized the influences of Amateur Radio in her vision of her father's daily activities. There was no reluctance in her expressions of her gratitude for what this hobby and its participants have given to her father. Little did she know that these feelings were also shared by the Amateur Radio world as well.

This was somewhat evidenced by the number of Amateur Radio operators who attended this moving service.

Daughter Debbie also told of her being shortchanged in the computer skills so well demonstrated by her father. Yet, embracing the persistence so often demonstrated by her talented Dad, she successfully mastered the challenge of having never scanned a photograph and then sending it to someone.

Not long after what Debbie Boonin Dillon hoped was the successful transmission of the image and accompanying text for the death notice to The Philadelphia Inquirer from her home in Erie, Pennsylvania a telephone call told of her success. The Inquirer obituary staff editor called to tell of the hard-fought success.

An abbreviated version of an earlier composed tome was shared with the attendees by Nat's grandson Dan Dillon. The poised high school student agreed to share the larger text. It is duplicated for readers of the *eDipole*.

Even though Nat was suffering from this illness this did not prevent him from being a strong influence in the production and distribution of printed version of the Marple Newtown Amateur Radio Club's monthly publication, **The Dipole** and its recent successor, the *eDipole*, and electronic version.

During the highlights shared by Jim Biddle, W3DCL, Biddle outlined the professional involvement in every aspect of the preparation of the print and electronic publication. His fiscal talents helped in the justification behind the transition from the expensive print and postage version of the group's information item.

President Walter Faust, the second speaker representing the collection of Amateur Radio operators, began his observations of Nat Boonin. He strongly stated that Nat was the ideal, faithful treasurer. He has served in monetary and oversight roles since the formal creation of the Marple Newtown Amateur Radio Club

His wisdom and experiences within the regional Amateur Radio group has been a faithful helping aid to each of the three presidents that have led the group. As was cited by President Faust and amplified by a segment of the Amateur Radio operators attending the service, Nat was a faithful and skilled teacher at the instructional classes provided for many years by the Marple Newtown Amateur Radio Club.

Faust also shared an ongoing joke about Nat and Rose's many vacation trips. Trips that became the topic of meeting presentations on many occasions. The joke dealt with the funding of these trips with the mythical use of the Club's money. Had Nat not been so loyal and ethical, both the treasurer and the members would not have enjoyed a joke of this nature.

Dr. Carter Craigie, N3AO, a skilled college professor joined the Amateur Radio members in lauding Nat Boonin. The retired Cabrini College professor has been visitor and program presenter at the Marple Newtown Amateur Radio Club on many occasions. This forum, plus Nat Boonin's membership in the neighboring Mid Atlantic Amateur Radio Club, prompted Dr. Craigie to share some of the special background facets of Amateur Radio.

It was not the retired professor, but instead, the "inner teacher" that provided both a background of the use of numerical equivalents for pre-established thoughts. He chose to highlight this concept by sharing a phrase quite commonly used by Amateur Radio operator, our "73." Not only did Craigie provide a faithful definition, but also in a short time he taught the entire group how to "send" Morse Code.

Using the sounds of the collection of "dits" and "dahs," the teaching doctor helped in his lesson by demonstrating the almost poetic sound of the mirrored elements of the code sounds for "73."

In his short lesson, everyone in the room, Ham and non-Ham, was saying in unison the code for this goodbye message. This contributed to a very fitting way to pay final respects to Nat Boonin. As an added outcome of this well-presented lesson, the image of Amateur Radio was pleasantly painted in a very favorable and understanding image.

The Amateur Radio contingent included American Radio League First Vice President Kay Craigie, K3KN, Marple Newtown Amateur Radio club officers and members, and students of SK Nat Boonin.

The following is an electronic note that was sent by Nat's daughter. These kind thoughts help establish the format for this piece about our Treasure SK...

9-27-06

Mr. Biddle,

My family would be very grateful if you would publish the following thank you to the radio club. I'll send my father's picture and my son's biography of my Dad in separate emails. Thanks again!! We know my Dad would be thankful, too.

Yours,

Debbie Boonin Dillon

Debbie Boonin Dillon included a very nice story to the membership of the Marple Newtown Amateur Radio Club. It follows:

Dear Marple Newtown Amateur Radio Club,

My family and I cannot begin to thank all of you enough for the companionship and joy you have given over the years to my father, Nat Boonin W3JS. Your friendship went well beyond a shared passion for electronics; you were like family to him. I'll never forget one Thursday a few years ago when my father attended a board meeting he thought he would have to miss. He was in the hospital, and during the meeting, the other board members "conference called" him to wish him well. My Dad was thrilled. Plus, this was just more evidence to my family that all of you **must** communicate. Your club members are literally "well connected", and we appreciated how you kept my father "in the loop". It was so wonderful to finally "eyeball" with many of you last week. This was truly heart-warming for me and my family. We thank you for this, the beautiful fruit basket you sent, and the happiness you have shared with my father and this community.

We are still "singing" 73's to each other.

73's to you and yours,

Loads of Love,

Debbie Boonin Dillon, daughter of Nat and Rose Boonin

Following the gathering of family, friends, and the Amateur Radio community, daughter Debbie Dillon was asked if the picture she sent east to the Philadelphia newspapers could be shared with readers of the eDipole. Additionally, the text shared by grandson Dan was far too short. The Erie, Pennsylvania family has kindly shared both the image of Rose, Nat Boon and their grandchildren. The picture was taken some years ago. Those grandchildren have grown to be talented and polite young adults.

The following is a note that accompanied the story written by Dan Dillon.

Dear Mr. Biddle,

Here is the story my son, Daniel, wrote about my father. This is a little dated, since it was written about 4 years ago. Thanks again for sharing this with the radio club.

Yours,

Debbie Boonin Dillon

The following is the three page essay Dan Dillon wrote about his grandfather, Nat Boonin. This piece was written in January, 2003:

Dan Dillon 6-7

### **Nat Boonin**

Nat watched the world speed by below him. He was on a test flight over the Delaware River in a helicopter. Suddenly, the pilot veered the helicopter downward, straight below the Delaware memorial Bridge. The pilot was very experienced, but Boonin still felt odd flying under something. As he looked up at the bottom of the bridge, the pilot remarked, "This is something to tell your grandchildren about."

Nathaniel Boonin was born on July 2, 1929, in North Bergen, New Jersey. He was the child of proud Mendle and Gertrude Boonin, and he already had a sister, Miriam. When the Great Depression began! Mendle was working on a highway called the Plasaki Skyway. After the work was complete, all the workers were laid off due to the Great Depression. As a result, the Boonins moved to Philadelphia and lived with Nat's grandparents and his Uncle Milton (Gertrude's brother). The move occurred after Nat was finished with first grade.

When Nat went to school, the main differences were discipline and technology. If someone misbehaved, the person would probably get whipped with a belt. Computer and television-related learning methods were impossible without the computers and televisions. The teachers often used repetition methods to drill facts into the students' heads. There weren't any buses back then, so everyone had to walk to school.

Nat liked many things but loved going to movies. The Saturday matinee cost just ten cents and consisted a newsreel, a cartoon, a serial story, and the main feature. The serial story was shown in installments, so each installment usually ended with the hero in trouble to attract viewers the next week. The serial ran for weeks, so the Nat often went many weeks in a row. Movies were especially important to Nat since VCRs didn't exist back then. Each movie could only be seen once, but Nat still remembers adventure movies such as "The Lives of the Bengal Lancers" and "Mutiny on the Bounty" as his favorites. If Nat missed a movie, he wouldn't be able to see it until VCRs were invented.

Nat did also many other things as a child other than going to the movies. The toys were just as interesting then as they are now. Nat especially enjoyed his toy electric train set, car, airplane! and steam-powered boat. All of those toys were made of metal. However, they weren't made out of plastic, and they usually didn't contain any batteries or lights. Nat wasn't a huge athlete, but he did play football and baseball as a child. Nat enjoyed following high school football, college football, and baseball. He also played games such as kick the can and other old favorites.

Mendle found no engineering jobs in Philadelphia, so he helped his brother run a grocery store. The family lived with Milton and Nat's grandparents for two years but soon found different a grocery store for sale in Upper Darby, PA. The time was ripe, and the Boonins bought the store. Housing was no longer a problem as Nat's family lived behind the store. The Boonins ran the store from 1932 to 1942. As demand for engineers grew during World War II, Mendle found work at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. The family no longer needed the store and sold it.

When Nat turned eighteen in 1943, he was drafted into the Navy. This was very different for Nat as he had never been away from home. He wasn't used to sleeping with someone in his room, let alone 120 people. However, he was ready to fight for his country. Life on his ship in the South Pacific was actually okay, and Nat luckily never saw action.

After school, the Navy sent him to Drexel for college under the GI Bill of Rights. He followed in his father's engineering footsteps and majored in Electrical Engineering. Many veterans went to school under this law that granted government aid, so many people, including Nat, were older than usual college students. While in college, he married Rose Kashoff.

Nat soon got a job with RCA in Camden, New Jersey after graduating from Drexel. He was working on Radar systems for the government. He only worked there for a year before finding work at Franklin Institute Labs across the Delaware River in Philadelphia where he worked on a readout system that was used to test steel at a steel plant. His job could be completed with a desktop computer today. Since he had married Rose, Rose

and Nat had lived in an apartment owned by his sister Miriam in the area where Nat moved to from New Jersey, Upper Darby. Nat was all about to change.

Rose and Nat had a boy, Alan, in 1952 while Nat was working with RCA. Deborah Boonin was born three years later. Having trouble fitting the family in a tiny apartment, Nat moved the four of them to Lawrence Park, another Philadelphia suburb. Now that he had a family, Nat had to find a stable job.

Boonin jumped jobs for a few years until finding his niche in the Boeing company. A coworker at his last job before Boeing had worked there previously and was going back. Nat thought he would go along, and the person got Nat involved in building helicopters. This was a high-paying job that he found interesting. Nat had found what he had been looking for and subsequently moved the family to yet another suburb, Newtown Square. The house was of the same size but had more land around it. After a brief adjustment period, everyone was happy. Nat had found what he was going to do with his life, and he was going to stick with it.

Nat indeed did stick with the Boeing job until the children were well out of the house. He didn't retire from Boeing until 1987. In his retirement, he loves to tinker with ham radios, a hobby that dates back to the early 1940s. In fact, Nat is in a radio club for ham radio enthusiasts such as himself, He and Rose take advantage of their free time during retirement and take many vacations. They love being able to go on a trip at any time, and it is always enjoyable for Nat to listen to traffic reports without having to worry about them. However, during his retirement, Nat is still extremely active. Nat gives to the community by delivering food to needy senior citizens in conjunction with the program Meals On Wheels. Nat talks to each of his children on the phone every week and enjoys talking to his grandchildren from time to time.

Nat has never been "behind the times." He already loved technology as a teenager with ham radios. He learned many modern technological skills with Boeing. Even now, Nat has learned much about computers. Family has always been number one with Nat, past and present. I am grateful to be one of his grandchildren because of his high regard for family. He is always ready to pass on knowledge to anyone that seeks it, including me, One would be hard-pressed to find a more interesting grandparent. He heads into the new millennium and beyond with good health, a loving family, and plenty of things to tell his grandchildren about.



Nat and Rosie and Their Grandchildren