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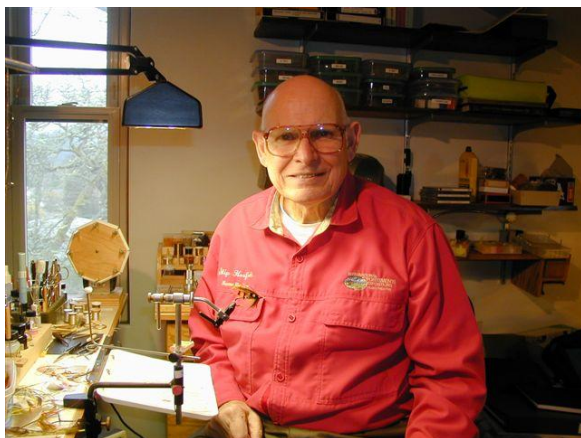
This interview was conducted with Skip Hosfield in March 2012 at the Northwest Fly Tyers Exposition in Albany, Oregon. The interviewer was Danny Beatty.



DB: I'm Danny Beatty. I'm here with Skip Hosfield at the Northwest Fly Tying Exposition in Albany, Oregon. Skip lives in Eugene, and we're doing an oral history on fly fishing. I'd like to ask Skip now to start by explaining and talking about his early fishing experiences.

SH: Thank you, Danny. My earliest connection with fishing came through my father, who was a fly fisherman. I grew up in Akron, Ohio, where my family on both sides had been for several generations. My dad was a high school football and basketball coach back in the 1930s and 40s, and he was a fly fisherman. There are a lot of lakes around Akron. It was a big fishing area. The Pflueger Manufacturing Company was based there in Akron. My earliest recollections were to go fishing with my father when I was too young to do anything except sit in the boat and watch. Dad used to like to fish for bluegills, and he fly fished for them. He'd go out and he'd fill a live bucket of bluegills. My grandfather loved to eat fish, so he'd take them over to his dad's house. It would usually be dark by then because he'd fish until dark, you know, that's when the fishing was good. And Grandpa would dump those out in the sink in the kitchen and start cleaning fish, and I was fascinated by it. And nothing would do, but he'd have my grandmother cook up those fish right away. This would be 8 or 9 o'clock at night, and we'd eat fish. And I was always getting those damn fish bones caught in my throat, you know, because we didn't fillet them in those days. We just fried them in cornmeal.

When I got a little older, I had an opportunity to spend summers on the lakes. There is a series of lakes just south of Akron called the Portage Lakes. Some of them are reservoir impoundments and some are natural lakes. Reservoir impoundments were originally put in to supply water for the rubber companies in Akron, and also to keep the Ohio Canal full of water. There was a great recreational area there in those days.



In 1935, I guess it was, my father got a summer job at a camp run by the Salvation Army. In those days, teachers, you were just paid for the nine months. They had to look around for another job in the summer. We spent two summers at that camp, and it was right on a lake. My dad and mother had a little cabin at one end of the camp right on the lake, a one-room cabin, and I had two baby sisters that were toddlers. Well, one of them was an actual infant, the other one was a toddler, and they all lived in that one-room cabin. It had a little dock there, and in the evening dad could fish right off the dock. I think I was about six years old, he put his fly rod in my hand and showed me how to put the fly out about 20 feet and fish for bluegills with poppers. And that's where I first fished.

Skip Hosfield Edit Transcript -- March 2012

Fly Fishing Collection

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However, I didn't get into it full time with my own rod until I was up around high school age. Up until that time, we spent several other summers at the lake in a different cottage, up through 1937 and 1938, and after that Dad got a job with a milk company in the summertime delivering milk, and so we stayed in town.

During the war my father joined the Navy. And he was gone from 1943 to 1945. When he was gone, I used his fly rod, and I occasionally got a chance to go out fishing with a relative or a friend. By the time I was in high school, I made friends with a couple other boys who were interested in fly fishing, and we became buddies, and so we would go out and fish together. We'd take a bus sometimes or hitchhike or get one of our parents to drive us to a nearby lake. So that was my introduction to the sport of fly fishing, and it continued my entire life, until this time.

DB: Okay. So, this experience was in high school, but then when you went on to college at Princeton, you met some other people that we'd like to hear your comments about.

SH: Well I had the opportunity to go east to college. I was pretty heavily into fly fishing by that time with my friends that I made through scouting, the Boy Scouts. I was working at the summer camp through high school. And one of my pals, George Twining, went to Yale, and I went to Princeton, so we maintained contact throughout college. And I tried a little bit of fishing back in New Jersey on opening day one year. In fact I still have my diary of opening day of fishing, which was quite a different experience for me, at a creek in New Jersey there.

In 1949, a notice appeared in the school newspaper that the outing club was trying to put together a team of fly fishermen to participate in what was being billed as the Eastern Intercollegiate Trout Fishing Derby up at Amherst College. So I answered the ad, and I met another student by the name of Francis Wood. He was a year ahead of me in school. Fran Wood and I and a third person made up a three-man team to go up to Amherst that weekend. And my friend up at Yale, George Twining, put together a team to represent Yale. So we hitchhiked up to Amherst and participated in what was the first of its type that I think there was. Ted Rogowski, who was a student at Amherst at that time, organized this whole thing and put it together and invited Lee Wulff to be the headline speaker at our dinner Saturday night. So we had a series of casting competitions on Saturday, and Saturday evening we had a dinner there in the cafeteria, and Lee Wulff showed his fishing films and talked to us, and he also had been the judge at the casting competition. Then on Sunday morning, we buddied up with somebody from one of the other schools, each of us, and went out and fished a nearby river.

The interesting thing about that is that Ted Rogowski turned out to be one of the organizers of the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers in New York. I eventually went out to Oregon and became one of the organizers of the McKenzie Flyfishers in Eugene, Oregon, in 1964. And both the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers and the McKenzie Flyfishers were the main promoters of the Conclave of Fly Fishermen held the following year, at which the Federation of Fly Fishers was founded. And at that original meeting, both Francis Wood and George Twining were present at the meeting.

DB: And did Ted Rogowski—

SH: Ted was not at that meeting. He had some sort of a conflict that he couldn't be there, but he was at the following charter meeting at Jackson Lake Lodge the next year.

DB: Just as an aside, was that how Ted met Lee Wulff and became more associated with him as the years went by?

SH: Well, Ted knew Lee Wulff-- I don't know whether Ted knew Lee Wulff at the time of the Amherst trout derby in 1949, but he subsequently knew Lee Wulff because he was a member of Theodore Gordon Flyfishers.

DB: And so it was about 1950 that Ted organized the fly club in the east?
Ed. Note: 1962 was when the Theodore Gordon Flyfishers was organized.

SH: I don't know what year it was.

DB: Oh. But it was somewhere after 1949.

SH: Yes.

DB: Okay. Now continue on between say 1950 and 1964, what was your fishing experience, your movement, and so forth out to Oregon?

SH: Well, I graduated from college in 1951, and I was slated to go into the Navy that summer, but due to a medical problem I was a couple years late getting in the service.

I was in the military from 1953 through early 1957, and I didn't do much fishing in all that time. I didn't get back into it until I got out of the Coast Guard and went back to school in Akron. I went back to school to get my professional degree in architecture, and they told me that I had an aptitude for teaching. I was older than most of the students there, and I was kind of in the role of a graduate assistant, and they said I should think about a career in college teaching. So I needed to get a graduate degree. On my way back from Alaska, I had visited George Twining up in the state of Washington. He had moved out there after completing his forestry master's degree at Yale, and I liked what I saw of the northwest, so I sent letters of inquiry to the University of Oregon and the University of Washington. Oregon responded right away, and they said they'd offer me a graduate assistantship, and they had a graduate program, and I could get the master's in one year. So I moved my family out to Oregon in the fall of 1958. And I subsequently got my degree. But after I got my degree, I found out that if I wanted to stay in the field, I'd have to look for a job elsewhere because they had a policy against hiring somebody that they'd just given a master's degree to. And I didn't want to leave Eugene. By that time, my second son had been born, and we owned a house in Eugene, and I thought, well, I've been trained as an architect I should probably give it a try. So we stayed, and I've never regretted the decision to stay, because-- Well, fishing was great, and eventually met a lot of friends, the McKenzie Flyfishers got organized a few years later, and it's been a major focus of my life ever since.

DB: After, you say now, in 1964, a group of you got together to form the McKenzie Flyfishers. How does that group get together?

SH: Well, when I moved to Oregon, I didn't know anybody out here, but I had read about the North Umpqua in Ray Bergman's *Trout*, and I had another book that talked about a fly tyers by the name of Polly Rosborough, and John Kolzer who lived in Oregon. So I set about trying to find these people in my spare time, when I could. There was also a fly shop in Eugene at that time, and I can't think of the name—Bill Hunt, had a fly shop, and he was a part-time guide. I'd go in Bill Hunt's office in the store, and I'd say, "Bill, we should have a fly club around here." He'd say, "Oh, no, no. I've tried that before. You start a fly club, and a bunch of guys join, and all they're interested in is buying tackle cheap." I was a member of Trout Unlimited. My friends that I'd left back there in Ohio told me about that, and I joined Trout Unlimited. I must have been one of the first members of Trout Unlimited in this part of the country, because there were no chapters out here.

But one day I saw, oh, I know, my wife was teaching school by then, and one of her students had a father who worked for the newspaper who was a fly fisherman, and she told me that I should talk to him, that he was fly tyer, and it was Stan Walters. I never got to meet Stan Walters, although I knew about him, and he lived not too far from me. But one day a notice appeared in the paper that somebody was going to have a meeting at his house on a given night with the purpose of getting a fly club started. That was Bill Nelson. He'd just gone to the newspaper and placed an ad. He had moved down from Washington and bought a business outside of Eugene, and he had been a member of the Everett club up in Everett, Washington. So a group of about six people showed up at that meeting. Now I couldn't go to that meeting because I had a reserve drill on that night. Subsequent meetings were at the

newspaper. Stan Walters got the lunchroom at the newspaper for subsequent organizational meetings, and that's when I became involved with that group. That was in the early spring, about this time of year, around March 1964.

And so there were about six or seven of us that hammered out the outline of what we wanted in a club. It would be a men's club, and it would be a dinner club, similar to what Bill had known up in Washington. In April we had our first big dinner meeting of that year, and we must've had about 60 people at that meeting. Interested people were invited to attend this meeting, and most of them joined. By the June meeting, we must have had a membership role of around, between 60 and 70. It was the June meeting that Bill proposed his objectives for the year (he was voted president of the club). One of the things he wanted to do at that first year was to organize a meeting of fly fishermen from the various clubs on the west coast who would be interested in forming a national federation of fly fishing clubs. So, committees were—heads were appointed, and we started working on it that summer.



Bill traveled a lot in his work. He sold equipment and supplies to tire shops. He manufactured tire patches for big truck tires and so forth. So he traveled all around Oregon and Washington. And he talked it up, and in the course of the subsequent year we put the thing together. The key part of the whole thing fell into place when Lee Wulff said he would come to the meeting. And that summer they heard about a meeting of, I think it was the Outdoor Writers Association were having a convention in Aspen. They heard that Lee Wulff was going to be there. So Bill Nelson, Bill Hilton, Stan Walters and Webb Russell rented a plane, and Bill Hilton, who had been an Army pilot in the war, flew out to Aspen to hunt down Lee Wulff. Well they never found Lee Wulff because he wasn't there. But they ran into Gene

Anderegg just walking down the street, and that's how they met Gene Anderegg. Apparently there had been talk in the Theodore Gordon Club about the same time at forming a federation of fly fishers, but nothing had been done about it. There had been some correspondence between Lee Wulff and Bob Wethern, who was an advertising man in Portland at the time. Lee Wulff had been out to Portland to address the Flyfishers' Club of Oregon. And so we've got correspondence between Bob Wethern and Lee Wulff, in which Bob Wethern said that there was already some steps being taken by this club in Eugene to set up such a meeting. So the link was made with the Theodore Gordon Club, which brought in Anderegg, Ed Zern, Rogowski, all those people ultimately, the editor of *Esquire*—help me with his name—I can't think of his name. It'll come (Arnold Gingrich). So when Lee Wulff pledged their support, we knew we had a go at that time, and we went full speed ahead from that fall on until June of the following year. And a meeting was held at the third weekend in June 1965, out at the County Squire Inn.

We had established contacts with California clubs and Washington clubs. We were about, I think, 14 clubs represented at that first meeting, and there were over, probably, something like 125, 130 people registered. My job—I volunteered to do the fly tying program because I knew a few fly ties. I'd met Polly Rosborough by that time. Later on I got dragooned into being the reservations chair, to register people for rooms at the motel, so that turned out to be the biggest job. We filled up that motel. And it was a very nice meeting.

DB: Do you think there was anyone else involved with helping plant the seed with Bill Nelson or any of this that got him thinking about organizing all these clubs?

SH: Bill Nelson always said that the idea was born during outings of the Everett club up on the Grande Ronde River, where they'd sit around the campfire at night and talk about it. So that's what got him enthused. Lew Bell was a big influence on Bill Nelson.

DB: Are we at liberty to say how the film *–Never Name the River,*” came about and the name of the river?

SH: Well, the thing was, this group from Washington that had been going up to the Grande Ronde River to fish for steelhead for some years, and it was a sort of an open secret among people in that part of the country knew about it, but nobody down in our part of the country knew about it. But Bill would take these home movies and show them and talk to everybody, but he always called it River X. And it got to be kind of a standing joke in the club that don’t give us any more of this talk about River X, you know.

The only other person he told about it, to my knowledge, was Dave Carlson. Bill took a shine to Dave Carlson, and he took Carlson up there with him one year. Carlson was the only other one that knew about it at that time. I finally figured it out myself where it was. After the Eugene meeting there in 1965, Rex Gerlach blew the whole thing open. He was an outdoor writer, and he wrote a magazine article about it. So everybody’s known about the Grande Ronde ever since then. This *–Never Name the River,*” was the project of Michael Wilson, a young fellow in our club who had aspirations to be a documentary filmmaker. He interviewed Bill, and he borrowed the tapes from me that were made by Ralph Wahl at the 1965 meeting. I had these tapes—I transferred them from--the club had a set of tapes. They were on big 5-inch reels. I transferred them to cassettes from the old reels, so I let Michael borrow my cassette tapes. And somehow when he made his film, he got this Grande Ronde thing all mixed up with the founding of the Federation, to an extent that I thought was rather peculiar, because sure enough, the idea may have been born up on the Grande Ronde, but it didn’t have anything to do with *–Never...*” I don’t know why he called it *–Never Name the River.*” I thought it was a bizarre name, and I told him so.

DB: Do you have any more information you’d like to include in this formation of Federation of Fly Fishers and your involvement at that time? We can go on to something later, your continued involvement, but I want to get also into your favorite places to fish in Oregon and that sort of thing.

SH: Well, I might discuss a little bit about the first year or two. We knew that while we may have been the motive force to put on that first weekend show that we didn’t have the capability of promoting it nationwide, that we were going to have to depend on these people from the east to do that. A group of us that went to the charter meeting the following year at Jackson Lake Lodge, it must have been about six or eight of us that went over there. It was during the year between the Eugene meeting and the Jackson Lake meeting, all the legal business of setting up the corporation, you know, was being handled by Rogowski and some other guys. I assume it was Rogowski, I don’t know for sure. We could tell at that Jackson Lake meeting that a lot of people who showed up at that, that the year before I’d never heard of. I mean, Lefty Kreh, I met Lefty Kreh for the first time, and eastern saltwater fishermen. A lot of the names get away from me now. And we knew that we were sort of passing the torch on. Bill Nelson was elected a vice president, but Gene Anderegg was taking over, and that was fit and proper. Roderick Haig-Brown, who couldn’t come to our meeting in 1965 because he was in court, he was a magistrate up there, he was bound up in court, but he did make the meeting the following year, he and his wife and people like Vince Marinaro were there. Helen Shaw, the fly tier, and her husband Herman Kessler, the art director of *Esquire* were there. It was a great meeting, and we knew we had something going.

After we got home, we were sort of talking about the experience, and we thought, well, we had the feeling that maybe the thing was out of our hands now, and there was some feeling of a letdown, I guess, an emotional letdown.

DB: This was your club now, your McKenzie club—

SH: Yes, the club, yes, the club, the people that had been to Jackson Lake Lodge.

DB: Okay.

SH: And while we knew that the eastern people had the thing in their hands now, but I guess we thought maybe that we were going to be forgotten. There were some expressions of that, nobody cares about this club. I think it was in the following year, we went back again to Jackson Lake Lodge—

DB: This would be 1967?

SH: 1967, and it was then I think that they started giving awards, 1967. We talked about the awards at a board meeting. Nelson wasn't recognized for anything. And I had the idea that this is a federation of clubs and there were no clubs recognized, just individuals were recognized. And after we got home I made a proposal that we sponsor a club award, that we propose a club award, and that it be awarded each year to the federation club that had done the most to advance the ideas of the federation, and it should be named the McKenzie Cup, in honor of the McKenzie Fly Fishers. And that motion was made to the directors at the following meeting, and it was adopted. Well, once the award got to be, there was no cup, so we had to put together something, some tangible things. So we took a Tommy Brayshaw drawing, painting, and framed it on a Walnut plaque, with little brass plates where the names of the receiving clubs could be noted, and that's how the McKenzie Cup became established. The plaque was supposed to be a temporary thing until we got a cup, and I asked one of the fellows in the club who was an architect if he'd design a cup, and he never came up with a design. So ultimately, over ten years later, I came up with a design for the cup. The McKenzie Fly fishers was still on the hook to provide the trophy, so they funded it, and we decided we would have a cup made, and they sprung for the purchase of a hundred ounces of silver to do it. I found a sculptor who would cast it, and I found another guy who carved fish who made the pattern for the fish, the handles of the cup were a trout leaping up. He carved the wood patterns, and I had the bowl made by someone in the wood shop at South High School, and did a football shaped wood pattern. I found this sculptor that was recommended to me up in the woods in the coast range, and we eventually got the cup made and presented, I forget which year it was, I think you'll have to look it up. And the cup turned out so nice, they wouldn't trust the receiving clubs to take care of it, so eventually it became a permanent thing, I guess, in the museum, and they just present a picture of it, but that's how the McKenzie Cup came into being.

DB: Tommy Brayshaw, how did he fit into this?

SH: Tommy Brayshaw was a big hit at the Eugene Conclave. He came down with his wife. Ralph Wahl brought them down. And he was just a marvelous guy. He was kind of a living link with our roots in angling history in England. He brought some of his paintings, and he put two of them up for auction, the impromptu auction on the last day of the thing. I bought one of them at the auction, and Dave Carlson bought the other one. We bid against each other up to, oh, like \$140. I dropped out of the bidding at \$140, and Dave took it. Then the second one, some guy that wasn't even bidding on the first one stepped in, and he bid me up to the \$135 or something on the second one.

DB: We have to think about the time with the money you're talking about.

SH: Yes, yes, it was almost all the money I had in my checking account at the time. And then I went-- One of the other ones that Tommy had on display was a brown trout, and I asked him if he'd sell that. He said, sure. So I bought that one from him for \$50. So I ended up with two, which I ultimately printed, had a print addition made from two of mine and two that belonged to George Twining.

DB: I'm going to switch tapes.

Tape One, Side Two

DB: Did you become friends with Tommy Brayshaw during this time?

SH: Well, I was really busy with other things. I didn't have a lot of one on one time with him.

DB: No, but I meant from then on.

SH: Tommy Brayshaw became a good friend of the club. Our club and the Washington club and the Oregon club, they seemed to have close ties with Tommy because he gave us a lot of his drawings in subsequent years.

DB: Was he a member of a club in Vancouver?

SH: I don't know.

DB: Oh, okay. Did you associate with the Totems at all?

SH: The Totems were represented.

DB: Yes, okay. But they were about the only club up there—

SH: No, there was more than one club in BC. There was the Totem club and another one. I don't remember the name.

DB: Okay. Well, that's the one that comes to mind. Okay. So, do you have anything more in terms of the connection of your getting quite a few of Tommy's paintings, and you eventually made prints of them?

SH: Well, our club had quite a number of em. We had about a dozen that he had given us, and our club decided to make photographic reproductions of them for the club members, and they were always very popular. But the technology at the time was such that you could get a color print made, but the colors are very unstable—they'd fade in the light. I always felt that his work really merited a proper printing, which is expensive, and the club didn't want to undertake that. So we went through a series of maybe 7 or 8 of his prints that went to club members. We sold them to the club members for about \$10 or \$12 a piece, usually 8x10 glossy prints. So I decided I would print my own two, and I borrowed two from George Twining to print four at a time, which was an economical way of doing four up. I had them printed up in Seattle, and that's how I came to-- I did that in 1982, published that edition of the Brayshaw prints, which I still have most of them, some of them. They sold very rapidly at first, but the sales didn't hold up long. It seems that the younger generation of fly fishermen to come along were not that interested in collecting angling art.

DB: So the McKenzie club owned these original paintings from Brayshaw.

SH: Yes, we ultimately gave all the McKenzie originals to the Federation.

DB: And then eventually they came back and now they're at Western, and you were quite responsible for—

SH: Yes, I kind of talked the club into getting rid of them. They were an asset that had to be preserved, and a club isn't the best type of owner for that sort of thing.

DB: Right, that's for sure. Okay. Now, let's continue from 1967 and on. A few years ago you won the most prestigious award of the federation, the Lapis Lazuli. Would you explain how the award originally came about and why it was called the Lapis Lazuli? I know it was made from the lapis stone, but how did you end up using that as the name of the award?

SH: I had nothing to do with that. That came from Herman Kessler, I believe, he designed it. Herman Kessler designed all the artwork for the federation—the logo and all of that. I don't know. You know, blue is kind of a Federation color.

DB: Okay.

SH: And I can't tell you for sure when the first one was, but I think either Anderegg or Ed Strickland got it. I don't remember exactly. I'd have to look in the book. One of the-- Dr.—

DB: Nelson, maybe?

SH: --Nelson. Dr. Nelson was a dentist in Los Angeles who designed the ring and produced all the rings.

DB: He made them, yes.



SH: He made the rings for as long as he lived. Each one is a different design.

DB: Yes, okay.

SH: After 1967, I set up my own office. I left the firm I was working with and opened my own office, and about that time I also got involved with the Boy Scouts, and I had to pull away from a lot of club work at that time. I didn't go to a conclave until, oh until a regional conclave in 1973, up in Spokane. I was too busy trying to get my practice going and working with the Boy Scouts, until about 19—

that time?

DB: Your sons were involved with the Scouts at

SH: Yes, my kids were in the Scouts and I was a Scoutmaster. It must have been the late 1970s, about 1980, we had a Oregon subcouncil going. I was involved in the Oregon subcouncil with Keith Burkhart and a few others. Then Jim Eriser had moved to Sunriver, and there was another director from California who also moved up to Sunriver, and he was a director and he resigned, and I forget his name right now. But they were looking for somebody to fill his shoes, and they picked me, and I became a director in 1980, and that's when I reestablished an active role with the Federation, at the national level.

DB: And during this time, you're involved more with your sons in Boy Scouts, were you still doing fly fishing in Oregon—

SH: Oh, sure.

DB: --and you were kind of establishing where you liked to fish, I suppose. Why don't you talk a little bit about Oregon, the fly fishing.

SH: Well, I guess the first place I fly fished in Oregon was the North Umpqua. I made it a point to go down and explore that the very first year I was in Oregon. I met Frank Moore, and he hadn't been the owner of the Steamboat Lodge for very long at that time. I remember going down to fish the North Umpqua in the fall, you know, Indian summer, and I might see only one other fisherman on the river at that time. That's amazing. I never caught a steelhead in those years. It was a long time before I caught a steelhead. I didn't know anything about the river. It took a lot of time and fishing to know where the steelhead were and how to fish for them. I didn't have a McKenzie

boat, I'm a wader. And the McKenzie's very hard to wade. I fished the McKenzie where I could, but my favorite river was the Williamson.

After I met Polly Rosborough in 1960, yes, 1960, and I started going down to the Williamson, fishing there because it was wade-able, and those central Oregon streams I fished Crescent Creek in those years, and the lakes, and the Deschutes, wherever I could wade and get a line in I'd fish. Previously, all my trout fishing had been done in Michigan, and I used to go up there to the the Au Sable River in Michigan, up around Grayling, with my college chums, and we'd camp up there for like two weeks at a time before we'd go back to school in the fall. It was a shock to me to try to fish a stream like the McKenzie after fishing those meandering, slow flowing, friendly trout streams in Michigan. The first time I tried to step in the McKenzie, up around where the South Fork comes in, I was truly frightened by the force of the water. I never went in over my knees. I couldn't stand. But eventually I found places where I could fish.

DB: So, Skip, the rivers here on the west side of Oregon are the fast flowing, the hard to wade.

SH: Yes.

DB: Down where you met Polly, the rivers there are more what you found in Michigan.

SH: Yes, they don't have the gradient—

DB: --that would attract you to go there.

SH: Right, right, yes.

DB: Are there any other rivers in Oregon, the Deschutes, and those are all these fast-- Are there any rivers—

SH: I was not fishing the big Deschutes, but the Little Deschutes.

DB: Are there quieter streams somewhere in—

SH: Well, the Metolius and Fall River and—

DB: Okay, so there are other streams you've enjoyed.

SH: Yes.

DB: Okay.

SH: These rivers can drown you out here. We've lost club members in the McKenzie.

DB: Okay. So, you've primarily fished the rivers, the streams of Oregon, or are there some lakes that you'd like to—

SH: I used to fish, back in the Sixties, Davis Lake was really fabulous fishing. Fished a lot in Davis. I had a canoe back then. I bought a canoe in 1960.

DB: Okay, you said your club was tied in with the Washington club and the Evergreen club and so forth. There's a lake called Hosmer Lake. Did you ever—

SH: Hosmer, yes, I fished Hosmer.

DB: Did you ever go when the Washington club would have their outings—

SH: I've never been to one of their outings up there, but I used to fish Hosmer quite a lot.

DB: There was also another exchange of outings, wasn't it with the Evergreen club on the Stillaguamish?

SH: We still have an annual outing with the Evergreen club. It used to be-- It started out on the Kalama. We'd meet them halfway.

DB: Oh, okay.

SH: The Kalama gradually became difficult because property along the shore, you know, and so it became home and home thing, the Umpqua or the Stilly.

DB: And then you'd fish the Evergreen Club's river, which is the north fork of the Stillaguamish. Did you fish that? Did you actually go up there and fish with them?

SH: I only fished the Stilly once with Dub Price, that was the summer of 1968. I was doing my two weeks summer training duty at Sand Point Naval Station. I got together on a weekend with Dub Price, and we went up and fished the Stilly, and fished the Stilly with him.

DB: Quickly explain why Dub Price is a name in fly fishing.

SH: Walt Price, Jr., nicknamed Dub, was member of the Everett club, and he was a participant in the – he was on the program of the Eugene Conclave in 1965. He was an artist, and a fabulous fly tyer too. He put together a fly display of steelhead flies for us, tied by various tyers of that part of the country. I know, there was some-- I have a problem coming up with names of people I know now.

DB: Was Knudson one?

SH: Yes, Knudson and—

DB: But have you mentioned Bell, Lew Bell?

SH: I mentioned Lew Bell earlier.

DB: Yes, was he involved with this other fishing part with your groups? I know he was involved with the federation formation, but these other activities around actual fly fishing.

SH: Well, yes, the only time I ever fished with Lew Bell was when we went over to Jackson Lake and we were camping with Lew Bell.

DB: Okay. I'm trying to see if we can develop some friendships, contacts, other than the federation part [of] your fly fishing experience.

SH: Lew Bell was very busy with a law practice, and so he didn't get to a lot of the outings.

DB: Okay. So, then we now move up to about 1980 and the Spokane Conclave, and you became a director about that time.

SH: I became a director about 1980, and no, I was not at the Spokane Conclave. The first conclave, I attended as a director was at West Yellowstone, in 1983.

DB: Okay, that was in West Yellowstone, 1983. And at that point, you became very involved again.

SH: Yes.

DB: And so let's go through a little of that.

SH: What happened, that was when they were -- that was about the time they were trying to promote -- they were trying to promote a home for FFF, and it was Yellowstone. Now, you may recall when you and I met with the outdoor exposition founder-- You and I went up and had lunch with him up in Portland.

DB: Oh, oh, Ed Rice.

SH: Ed Rice, Ed Rice. You recall when we met with Ed Rice.

DB: Oh, sure.

SH: And Ed Rice told us how this idea of a West Yellowstone museum and home for the FFF got off the ground. That was about the time I became director. But at the time, I was flattened out economically. At the time I couldn't afford to go to the conclave. We were at the end of that terrible recession in the late Seventies around 1980 when-- I was out of money. I was feeding the office.

DB: Kind of like it's been the last two or three years now.

SH: Right, right. So I knew this business was gone. They were trying to raise money for this museum thing, and it went totally in the tank. And by the time I got to the first conclave in 1983—

DB: But your business, house construction, and that was just falling off a cliff.

SH: Oh yes, yes. I ultimately -- I closed my office, I think, in December of 1983. I just went home. I was feeding all my savings into the paying of the rent and the expenses, and there was no work. So, at that time, Pete Van Gytenbeek just had been elected president of the Federation, and they were looking at different places. They had a field trip to Livingston to look at the old train station, to that ski resort, and—

DB: Big Sky.

SH: -- Big Sky. I went on that, and I met Van Gytenbeek. Van Gytenbeek was a Princetonian. He was coming in as I was leaving. He was class of 1955. So Van Gytenbeek-- I met Van Gytenbeek, he found out I was a Princetonian, and he found out I was an architect, so when they decided to take the West Yellowstone, the old [Union Pacific Railroad] building, and remodel it, he appointed me head of the committee to design the remodel. And I got Bill Heckel, who was an architectural draftsman, and Tom Porterfield, who was an architectural draftsman, to work with me on that. But I ended up doing the lion's share of the work from home. For the next year I worked on that full time really. And all this time I was active in the Oregon Council in membership. I was membership for I don't know how many years in the Oregon Council, the Northwest Council before that. So eventually you appointed me membership VP when you became the federation president.

DB: Yes.

SH: So throughout the early Eighties, the mid Eighties, I guess, I was just engaged doing volunteer work for the federation out of my house. I didn't have anything else to do really.

DB: I think one time you called it the kitchen table office or something.

SH: Well those were busy times, and oddly enough, I quit business about the time business was starting to pick up. I came out of retirement in 1990, briefly, but in 1989 I got cancer, and I had my kidney removed and they gave me a 25% chance to last another five years.

DB: But you did! Going back to 1985 to 1987 you increased the federation membership by about 50% or more.

SH: Well, I don't think it was 50%. I increased it by 3,000 members, from 9,000 to 12,000.

DB: Well okay, but it was a third then. It was a major increase. It was one of the biggest increases they ever had.



SH: Right.

DB: I don't know where membership is now, but... So, let's spend just a little time since then with the Oregon Council and the Fly Tyers Exposition, and you and a couple others really put that on the map.

SH: Well, we split off from the Northwest Council in 1988, and we'd been going to NW Council conclaves. When they had the council conclave in Olympia or Bellingham or some place, we always went to it. Keith Burkhart and I went up to the Olympia [Council] in 1988. Driving home, we were trying to think of how we could put on one of those things in Eugene or some place, and we were deterred by the prospect of it because we didn't think that the ones the Northwest had been putting on had been all that successful for the amount of work it was to put them on. And we didn't think we had the assets yet. And I thought—I suggested to Keith that maybe we could try doing a one-day event and just limit it to fly tying only, since that seemed to be the most popular feature of these weekend conclaves. He says, "Why don't we give it a try. Will you chair it?" "Okay, I'll chair it." So I had the job of putting the thing together, and we did the first one in 1989, and we only had about three dozen tyers. I didn't know whether we could get any tyers to come or not, so I just contacted the clubs and said recommend some good tyers, you know, from your club, and I'll invite em to come and tie at event, and we had about 36 I think, the first one.

The tyers responded well, and we discovered tyers we'd never heard of. And the public turned out for it. The venue we had at the Eugene fairgrounds was only available one day, and the tyers said, Well, we should expand this to two days. Well, we can't do it two days. For years they begged for a two-day event. It kept getting bigger and bigger and more crowded. People would come from all over. Flyers came from Washington, they came from California, they came from Idaho. Even a couple of them came from Montana. We even had one guy who came from Rhode Island. I chaired the first two years, and it became kind of a tradition to chair it for two years, and then somebody else would do it. And we resisted going to two days mainly for practical reasons, but also we felt that it was too big a job. It would be more than twice as difficult to do a two-day, and that's turned out to be the case. So when we decided to leave Eugene and come up here to Albany, a good facility, but it would take a tremendous effort from a

lot of people to make it a success. And I'm very gratified to know that it's lasted this many years here. It continues to be a success, and somehow the people to do the work seem to appear.

DB: And now you have how many tyers, about?

SH: 196, I think this year.

DB: That are scheduled through two days?

SH: Two days, five sessions over two days.

DB: That's amazing. Okay.

SH: I think it's the biggest fly fishing show in the world.

DB: Of this type.

SH: Period.

DB: In terms of?

SH: Fly fishing show.

DB: Really?

SH: I think it's the biggest there is.

DB: Wow.

SH: Because we've had tyers that have been to London, Amsterdam, New York, you know, the big shows. They say ours is the best. Norm Norlander goes to all these to demonstrate his Nor-Visse System. He tells me, hands down, none of the others are in the same league with ours.

DB: We're kind of getting to the end, I think, of the interview, but I would like to ask, and then I'll ask you to kind of summarize if you want anything I've missed, but let's go back now to Princeton and your friends, and you went to this fly fishing contest. Where has that ended through the years with Fran Wood and Ted Rogowski and so forth? They're still around.

SH: Fran visits me every time he comes to Oregon. Every time he comes to Oregon, he visits me.

DB: Okay.

SH: And here's my record of that meeting, the fishing log I kept at the time.

DB: This is from?

SH: From Amherst.

DB: 1948.

SH: 1949.

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DB: This is your diary of that time.

SH: That is my diary.

DB: And Fran gets first billing, first name in the-- Okay. Ted was a student at Amherst.

SH: He was a student at Amherst.

DB: What other schools were there?

SH: Oh we had Williams, Amherst, Yale, Harvard...

DB: Ivy League schools.

SH: They weren't all Ivy League schools. I don't remember all of them.

DB: Okay.

SH: There were quite a number of them.

DB: But you still, now all these years, 65 years later, you're still keeping in touch with these men.

SH: Yes.

DB: You still contact about fly fishing and life and everything.

SH: Yes.

DB: Okay.

SH: Fran and his second wife just visited us here recently. His first wife died of cancer some years ago, and we knew them quite well. We've been guests in their home, and they've been guests in ours. And after his first wife died, he married a close friend of hers, who grew up with her. His first wife grew up in Oregon, just up the road from Eugene, not Junction City, the next one up. So she has a big family there, so they come down several times a year to visit her relatives, so we see—

DB: Family is here too. Okay.

SH: I don't see much of Rogowski any more, since he moved back East.

DB: Since he left [Bellevue].

SH: Yes, he lived in that general area, and they moved back there after his wife died, and he married Joan Wulff.

DB: Is there anything you'd like to just kind of summarize some of fly fishing for you?

SH: I would just add that fly fishing and my participation in the FFF and the friends I've made in the FFF have become a big part of my life, and I treasure the friendships and the experiences that I've had. It goes far beyond the pleasures that I've had on a lake or a stream actually fishing.

DB: Oh, interesting.

SH: And fly tying, and more recently rod making, has also been an important part of it, and there's—

DB: Well, you mention fly tying being an important part, but maybe I missed a note there that you got very involved in the Atlantic salmon fly tying.

SH: Well, as I got up into my 70s, and having survived numerous recurrences of cancer and surgeries and that sort of thing, I started thinking about a few things I'd like to do before I die, and one of them was to make a bamboo fly rod, and another one was to tie an acceptable feather wing Atlantic salmon fly. So, when I was no longer a director and having to go to directors' meetings all the time, I was able to take some of these classes offered at the conclave, so I took the Atlantic salmon class twice before I actually started trying to tie them. So I got into it eventually and decided I'd tie a hundred of them before I decided whether I tied an acceptable one or not. So I started flying furiously, and it's about 2007, I guess. And then I also took a workshop in 2005, a bamboo workshop. So I decided to do two things at once. I was trying to continue my salmon fly tying, and I didn't know whether I was going to make more than one rod. I made the one rod, and it was so much fun and so successful that I thought, Gee whiz, do I want to do any more of this? And I kicked around the idea around in my mind. At my age I was—I was 76 then when I took the workshop. And there's a good bit of equipment and so forth. And I thought about it for a couple years while I continued tying flies. Finally, I said, Oh, I'm going to do it. I might live a few more years, so I started working on the bamboo, and it kind of took over for my fly tying. I found out I was-- The idea originally was that I'd tie flies in the morning and I'd work on the rods in the afternoon, but I spent more time in the shop than in the fly tying room. I ended up tying about, I think I tied 125, 126 flies, before my stroke ended my fly tying.

DB: One of those flies was quite important though.

SH: Yes, well, the FFF had this international competition in 2006, and I entered 9 different patterns, and I placed in a number of categories, but I took first place in the Atlantic salmon feather wing. And that was Fly #65, I believe.

DB: Okay, and that was a world champion?

SH: Well, it was open worldwide. I don't know how many people actually were involved.

DB: Atlantic Salmon Federation maybe?

SH: I never found out how many—

DB: And then, you ended up buying the planing materials so you could do your bamboo—

SH: Yes, I invested in all the equipment, and then some of it I had to build. It took some time.

DB: Okay.

SH: So I found a new avocation in the rod making, but that only lasted about a year because I had a recurrence of the cancer. In June of 2009, it hit me in the brain and caused me to have a stroke and paralyzed my right side. So that put an end to fly tying. I'm still working on the rods, working one handed.

DB: Yes. One of your friends told me they had helped you some.

SH: I have a friend volunteered to do the wrapping for me.

DB: Oh, that's, okay. Who is that?

SH: His name is Claude Darden.

DB: Yes, I—

SH: He's a gentleman that I met through my weekly swimming. I swam three times a week, and then I met him. He's a man in his late 60s. And he's, as a matter of fact, had open heart surgery yesterday. So, we're hoping he does well. But he's continuing to become a rod maker himself now.

DB: Anything else.

SH: I can't think of anything.

DB: Okay. Thank you. That was a great interview. Appreciate it.

End of recording



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