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This interview was conducted with William "Bill" Kindler on March 18, 2013, in WWU Libraries Special Collections, in Bellingham, Washington. The interviewer is Tamara Belts. The interview is in two parts as Mr. Kindler is also an alumni of Western Washington University.

TB: Today is Monday, March 18, 2013. My name is Tamara Belts and I'm here with Bill Kindler, who is both a graduate of Western, as well as an avid fly fisherman. He's also on the Advisory Board of the College of Sciences and Technology here at Western, so I'm asking lots of questions here. Okay, so our first question is how in the world did you get started fly fishing?

BK: I was a graduate student in Wisconsin in the late Sixties. One night I was supposed to be working at the laboratory but I guess I got bored or something and I wandered over to the recreational library and went to the fishing section. There was a book there by Rube Cross, who is one of the old time traditional Catskill fly tiers and fly fishermen. I just randomly grabbed that book and I started to look through it, and it was kind of a revelation to take fur and feathers and make something that looked like an insect to try to fool a trout.

So I read the book, and not too long after that, I was bait fishing on a small Wisconsin trout stream and a guy comes down the stream fly fishing. I thought, wow, he's having more fun than I am. So between seeing this fellow fly fishing and this Rube Cross book, I thought this sounds like something a guy could really get interested in. I was a graduate student at the time, so of course I didn't have any money, but I scraped up $20 and I bought a fly tying kit from Herter's in Waseca, Minnesota. For $20 you didn't get a lot of quality, but you got a lot of stuff, and it was a great start. So I started tying flies, and I had an $8 Japanese bamboo fly rod and an old Medalist fly reel. All I could afford was a level fly line. I couldn't afford the tapered fly line. I started tying flies and fly fishing, and you know, every once in a while you do something in life that for whatever reason it connected, and it's just been a wonderful sport for me ever since.

TB: Why don't you tell me a little bit more maybe about the fly tying because it's interesting that you were first sort of attracted to that idea because you yourself have become quite a craftsman. So were you always a bit of crafty person, or is that—

BK: No. It's just a matter of persistence. I'd be embarrassed to show you how many boxes of flies I have at home that I've tied over the years. So really to learn to tie flies you just need to tie a lot of flies. The more you tie the better you get. For some of us we have to tie more than the other folks. For me, it's just relaxing.

TB: Okay. What else about the fishing? Do you prefer lakes, rivers? Do you do the destination fishing?

BK: I like it all. I think there's a certain magic to rivers, right? The moving water, there's something about rivers that gives them just a little bit of an edge for me, a little bit more challenging to read, to figure out the currents to get a drag-free drift and the beauty. Remember what Haig-Brown said about why he fishes? He says, "Maybe it's just

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to be near rivers," and then he says, "If so, then I'm sure glad I thought of it." So that's a little bit of it, I think. I think rivers are probably the top spot, but I enjoy lakes too, a different set of challenges. One of the things I like about lakes is I like to row or paddle, and lake fishing gives you a nice opportunity to do that.

As far as destination fishing, yes, I do. I really like to go other places to fish, not necessarily because the fishing is any better there, although sometimes it may be, but just because of the experience of something different and new. I just got back from Patagonia. And fishing was exciting, it was good. But the real memories you bring home are the relationships with the people that you were with there, the relationships with the scenery and the environment of Patagonia. So fly fishing, it expands our horizons in a lot of ways.

TB: Could you tell me a little bit more about the fly tying again. I'm kind of shifting over here, but you did win an award. You received the Olympic Peninsula Fly Fishers John Gort Trophy for Excellence in Fly Tying?

BK: Yes, actually that award is for excellence in demonstrating fly tying. We have a fly tying demonstration at every meeting. It's part of our educational process to help new members learn to tie flies. But here's another really neat thing about fly fishing and fly tying both. I've tied flies for well over 45 years, and there's almost never an opportunity when I watch somebody else tie that I don't learn something. Isn't that amazing? And the same with fly fishing; this sport is so complex. There are so many aspects to it, the mechanics of the cast, the entomology of the insects, the ichthyology of the fish, the hydrology of the river flows. You never master it no matter how long you do it. We're always humble students. And I think that's one of the reasons why this sport appeals to us so much. The fun in life, whatever we do, the excitement in life doesn't come so much from the level that we're at. Excitement comes from the slope. To what extent are we getting better? To what extent are we learning more? To what extent are we broadening our understanding of the world? Well, in fly fishing, your slope is always pretty steep, and I think that's one of the reasons why we enjoy it so much. Lefty Kreh says, "As long as your legs will carry you down to the stream, you get a little bit smarter every time." And I think that's really true.

So back to the fly tying, so that's part of it. It's just this constant learning, constantly trying to figure out what it is that really appeals to the fish about the fly, reading, watching other people. It's just this constant learning.

TB: Okay. How did you get involved or start? Were you one of the founders of the Olympic Peninsula Fly Fishers?

BK: No. I wasn't. Let's see. I retired at the end of 2001. I was living in Georgia at the time, working in Georgia, and Trudy and I retired to the Olympic Peninsula. We're Northwesterners originally. I grew up in Oak Harbor, and then Trudy and I met here at Western, in Bellingham. And after Western, we went to graduate school in Wisconsin, and then we lived all over the country, Connecticut, Georgia, Wisconsin, Louisiana, California, with the job. But when we retired and could decide where we wanted to live, we made a beeline for Port Angeles.

We arrived there at the end of 2001, and I was anxious to start fly fishing there. And of course I didn't know much about the area, the rivers and the lakes, where to fish, how to fish. So I joined the club specifically to learn where to fish and how to fish the area. By nature I'm not really so much of a joiner, really, but I joined it for that reason, for selfish reasons, but it turned out to be a really good experience, a really good club, really good people, generous with their information. And I just got to like the people in the club more and more. When I joined it I think we were like—I'm guessing we were maybe 30 members, 30 or 40 members max, but today we're over a hundred. So the club has had some really good growth. It does a lot of really good meaningful things, other than just help us be better fly fishermen and better fly tiers. And with its social outreach, it makes it a really attractive organization to be part of.

TB: Oh, good. So when you lived in other parts of the country, have you belonged to other clubs or in other parts of organizational aspects of fly fishing?

BK: The only other time was when we lived in Camas, Washington, down by Vancouver. We lived there between 1970 and 1980. I had just started fly fishing, I had just graduated, started having a little bit more of money. Our son

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was six at the time and he liked to fish with me. So we were just getting into it, up grading our gear a little bit and our fly tying stuff. And there was a clothing store in downtown Camas, McMillan's Clothing Store. I walked by one day and maybe I went in to get a shirt or something, and this gentleman was tying a fly. And it was the most elegant fly I've ever seen. It was not a fancy pattern. It was a Steelhead Caddis, which is like a modification of a Muddler Minnow. But the interpretation that this tier was putting on his fly, it was just the most elegant fly I'd ever seen, sparsely tied—it was just beautiful. Well it turned out to be Bill McMillan, and that was when he was developing some of his really important patterns, steelhead patterns. So I pestered him with all kinds of questions, and we kind of struck up a friendship, maybe more of an acquaintance actually at that time.

He introduced me to the writings of Roderick Haig-Brown. In 1976 Trudy asked Bill for ideas for my Christmas gift. At Bill's suggestion, Trudy bought me six volumes of Haig-Brown, *The Four Seasons*, and *A River Never Sleeps*, and *Return to the River*. And well that was a huge step forward in my addiction or affiliation with fly fishing because as we all know Haig-Brown has a way of positioning the sport that just captures what's so important about it.

Well, at about that time, I also had become friends with a fellow that worked for the forest service, and his name was Jim Unterwegner, and it turned out that Bill was interested in starting a fly club in the Camas-Washougal area, and Jim Unterwegner was interested in starting a club in Vancouver, and neither of them seemed to be drumming up enough interest to really get the critical mass, to get something going. So I introduced them to each other. We combined forces, and that's when we formed the Clark-Skamania Fly Fishers, which went on under Bill's leadership largely to become a very important conservation minded fly fishing club in the Vancouver area. So I belonged to that club until I moved away in 1980, when I moved to Louisiana, and I didn't have any other club affiliations until I got to Port Angeles.

TB: Okay. So what about some others things, I mean I know that you've been involved in NatureBridge, Olympic Park Institute, and you've also worked with injured veterans, to teach them to fly fish. Is that the Project Healing Waters or is that something different?

BK: It's Project Healing Waters. Our club has two major categories of public outreach. One is kids and the other is disabled service people, both active and veterans. With respect to working with the wounded service people, our work is almost entirely through Healing Waters. We're big fans of Healing Waters. It's a national organization. We're just one small contributor to it. But we see what they do, what they're able to do with some of our citizens who've given so much for us. We see fly fishing and fly tying being such a wonderful vehicle to help these people, maybe more than just going fishing or tying flies, that that experience teaches them that they can transcend their handicaps. That's really exciting. Some of the handicaps are really hard, some physical and some mental. So what we do there is we've made tool kits, fly tying tool kits. One of our members, Dean Childs, used to own Wasatch Fly Tying Tool Company, so he's been instrumental in getting these tool kits made up. We get the parts for the tools, we make the tools, we put them in a pouch. Last count, we're at about 1200 tool sets under Dean's leadership.

Other things that we do with Healing Waters is every spring we bring a group up from Seattle and Fort Lewis for a day of fishing at Pooh's Pond. Pooh's Pond is a private fishing facility. It's open with easy access, full of fish, nice picnic facilities. So we bring these groups in, and we put one of our members with each of them to help them fish. We cook hamburgers and hotdogs, and we just have a really nice fun day. We also have some older wounded veterans from the Port Angeles area that join us. Sometimes the soldiers will bring their families with them. We have fly casting lessons, tying lessons. It's a big day, it's a fun day.

We had a project, I think about three years ago now, where we wanted to donate a fishing boat to Healing Waters for them to take the soldiers fishing in. We built the boat with the labor of club members as well as some of the disabled soldiers. On one especially memorable day, we had set it up so that the final strip in the hull would be installed by one of the servicemen. It turned out to be a young fellow, under 30, he was a young army captain, bright. I think he was a UC Berkeley graduate, just had all the things that are in store for a successful life except legs. And when it came to put the final strip down, we had to lift him up so that he could put the strip in, but very meaningful and memorable to all of us.

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Then I remember others, one in particular that had PTSD, and how therapeutic the woodworking was for him, so much so that he's vowed that he's going to continue building boats now that he's out of the service. I sure hope he does. So we completed the boat and we had almost 40 people working on it, none of them boat builders. So we had a lot of amateur effort, and there are places where the boat shows it. But our mantra throughout the process was "Perfection is driven by fear. Beauty is inspired by love." This is a boat of love, it's just beautiful. It's not perfect, but boy is it beautiful. So that was a really good project. I know all the club members, and certainly myself, really benefitted from that project. It was frustrating—it took us a long time. We had to do things and redo things, but we wouldn't trade it for anything. It was a great experience.

Another thing that our club has done is that one of our members, John Gort, has invented a Purple Heart Fly. It's a really elaborate fly, and if you look at it, you see a purple heart. John has tied and given away, 226 of them by now. It's a very time consuming fly to tie, but it's very beautiful and very meaningful, and something that John's really committed to, so that's been a nice effort.

A couple of years ago, Project Healing Waters honored our club with their highest recognition, the Freedom Award. That sits on a shelf alongside of the McKenzie Cup given by the Federation of Fly Fishers to our club.

The other thing that we've done with wounded service people is with a group that supports Purple Heart recipients and their families. They come to NatureBridge on Lake Crescent, and we give them a day of fly fishing and fly tying lessons. We've done that twice now, and it's another meaningful and a fun experience too; so a pretty good commitment to our wounded warriors.

And as far as the kids' activities go, we put on a fishing derby every year. We tie at kids' fests where we'll tie and give away 300-400 flies to kids. We let them design it and then we tie it, name it after them, so it's great fun.

We also teach a day long class at Camp Fire USA. They have a week long outing at Lake Crescent, and we teach for a day there.

TB: Now is that girls, then?

BK: It used to be. It used to be Camp Fire Girls, or something like that. Now it's Camp Fire USA because it's co-ed. The world's changing. I guess those are the big things we do with the kids.

TB: So, what about the Olympic Park Institute?

BK: OPI and NatureBridge are one and the same. NatureBridge exists for the purpose of teaching environmental science to young people. We have four campuses, four main campuses, a couple satellite campuses, three in California and one on Lake Crescent on the Olympic Peninsula. For the Olympic campus, last year we had over 4000 kids. They come for 3-5 days, and it's mostly field work. Why I'm so committed to NatureBridge is because their goal is not so much to teach kids the difference between a fir tree and a spruce tree, but their goal is to teach young people to go into the woods, to be observant, to ask questions, and then to pick a particularly interesting question to them, formulate a hypothesis that would answer that question, and then on their own, devise and execute a research program during the rest of the week to carry out, to prove or disprove their hypothesis, and then to give a formal scientific-type report of it on Friday afternoon.

To me the power of the organization, the power of the experience is that it teaches young people to think critically, to have confidence in their own ability to conjure up a problem and then solve it. Part of it's a technique, but part of it's just the confidence, you know, and being able to do that, as opposed to just listening to somebody on TV and then just taking what they say as the truth, but to think more critically about it. And part of that, the most specific application of that is the attempt to help young people understand how they can better live within the environment of this challenged world that we're living in today and how they can do their part to make that better. But also I like to think in a broader sense that if they learn this framework or process of thinking, maybe it'll plant the political

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decisions, maybe spiritual decisions, maybe social decisions. It just seems to me that if people can learn that at a younger age, they're going to be better citizens. So that's why I'm committed to NatureBridge.

TB: Wow. Tell me a little bit about your woodworking. How did you get started doing your woodworking?

BK: In 1976, I saw a wooden canoe, and it was so beautiful. It was a strip built wooden canoe. I really wanted one but I couldn't afford to buy one. They're pretty expensive. So I found a place where I could buy a kit and build it myself, so I did that. Well what I found was I loved the product, the canoe at the end, but what I really loved was the process of making it. But then I had a family and a career and we moved around a lot, and it just wasn't feasible to get into it after just that one. So as I got further in my career, into my mid-50s, I started thinking about early retirement. In large measure what drove the early retirement was this intense desire to build wooden boats, so the retirement was kind of planned around wooden boats, fly fishing too, but the wooden boats was just a huge driver. One of the reasons we chose to retire in Port Angeles is because we're right in the middle. In Forks we have access to wonderful old growth Western Red Cedar, and on the other side in Port Townsend we have sort of the wooden boat building capital of the west coast, with the wooden boat school, Chandlery, lumber shops like Edensaw. So it's just a really good place for a wooden boat builder to be located, so that had something to do even with where we retired. And it did drive me to early retirement.

So when I retired at the end of 2001, the first thing was to build the shop, and outfit it, and then to start building boats. I build canoes and kayaks and small rowboats. Most of them are strip built, although I have built one lapstrake, and I'm currently working on a second lapstrake. Iain Oughtred designs, which are beautiful little boats. I have built 16 boats on my own. But even more fun now is I've helped 10 other people, build their own boats.

TB: Well I know that you've donated some to charity, but did you sell some boats?

BK: No, no. If I sold them then it would be a job. And the last thing I want is a job, right? I gave my family all they would take, and they won't take any more. So what I really like to do now is I love to donate them to fundraisers, because that way I get the selfish joy of building it, and then some worthy organization gets some income off of it, and then hopefully somebody wins the boat in a raffle or in an auction and then has a nice boat to take and enjoy with their family, so hopefully everybody wins there.

TB: Yes, I've seen one it's beautiful. In fact, you donated one to Viking Night.

BK: I donated one to Western. Let's see, one went to Survivor's Outdoor Experience, which is an organization on the Olympic Peninsula that helps cancer victims. One went to an autism group, an epilepsy group, Port Angeles Symphony, Wild Fish Conservancy, the organization that Bill McMillan helped found and was so involved in.

TB: How long does it take you to make a boat, roughly?

BK: I never figure it up, again, it's not a job, it's just that I enjoy doing it. So I don't know. I typically build two a year, and I only work in the wintertime. I don't work in the summertime.

TB: Okay. Why don't you speak a little bit more about your friends? I know now how you met Bill McMillan. How did you meet John Alevras?

BK: I met John when a good friend, Don Pease, and I decided to do a Haig-Brown pilgrimage on Vancouver Island a couple of years ago. Don and I, by the way were college roommates here at Western back in the early Sixties. When I told the proprietor of our local fly shop about our proposed pilgrimage, he said you must meet John Alevras because he just published a book written by Van Egan about Haig-Brown's fishing equipment. He gave me the contact information and John was helpful in planning our trip. We started at the north and the Nimpkish, the Marble, then we worked down on the west side to the Gold and the Heber, the Stamp. It took a little bit of work, but we found General Money's Pool, on the Stamp, that Haig-Brown talked about. So, it took a little bit of research in some of these cases, but it was great fun to find these places that Haig-Brown talked about.

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TB: Oh, the tackle book.

BK: The tackle book, Haig-Brown's tackle book. John helped me obtain a copy of the book. I was really thrilled. It's a gorgeous book. I mean, it's just – I'm just thrilled to have it. It's one of my most prized books.

TB: Did you ever meet Van Egan, then?

BK: Yes. One time Trudy and I went to the Haig-Brown Festival. Are you familiar with the Haig-Brown Festival? Ah, it's so cool. It's in September I think it's every other year. It's held at his house, which is now on the National Historic Register of British Columbia. His daughters come. And this was one of the first Haig-Brown Festivals, so several years ago, and Van Egan was well then, and he was selling his books. And you know he has that wonderful trilogy on the rivers, *Rivers on My Mind*, *River of Salt*, *Rivers of Return*.

TB: We have one of them on display right now (*Rivers on My Mind*).

BK: Yes, they're really nice books. Anyway, he had a little table there where he had his books, and so we stopped to talk to him. He was just a wonderful man to talk to. I mean, he was just kind of quiet and unassuming but he sparkles, you know. He's one of these people that just sparkles. And we just had the most fun talking to him, so much so that I ended up buying two copies of the trilogies, for no reason except he was such a cool guy, "I'll buy two of them." And that's why you got one.

TB: Alright, excellent.

BK: And Trudy loved him. I mean, he related so well. You know, his wife, I've never met her; I think her name was Maxine? She was famous for being such a good steelhead fisherman. So he's really into women fishing. And Trudy doesn't fish for steelhead, but she loves to salmon fish, so she and he, of course with his book *Tyee*, you know, he's into that kind of fishing as well, which Trudy loves to do, so they just had a great time. It was a really nice experience.

Then when Don and I went on this pilgrimage a couple years ago, we wrapped it up in Campbell River at the Haig-Brown Festival. That was our last day on the island, and that was the year that Van Egan had passed away.

BK: Neil Cameron gave a eulogy to Van Egan in the form of a poem, not a poem that he wrote, but an existing poem, a lengthy poem, and he recited it from memory. It was incredibly touching, really powerful. I didn't know Van Egan. I just met him on that one occasion, and then had that experience of listening to his eulogy. But they were both really positive. So when somebody says Van Egan, it conjures up a real warm thought.

TB: Wow. Okay. Anything else, like other people you've known, or things you've done, we want you to brag. Sometimes for like Van Egan, he's not here to tell his story. It's really nice when you can catch somebody else who had some sense of the person and can tell his story.

BK: But of course, he's not here to tell his story, but his legacy is the stories that he told Trudy and I and in his books. Same with Doug Rose; you know, I didn't know Doug Rose well, went on a couple of outings with him, just down to earth, no pretenses, completely absorbed in anadromous fish. Understanding them, not just catching them, but just understanding them and respecting them. I regret that I didn't get to know Doug better, that I didn't take the energy to get to know Doug better because he's just such a positive influence on our sport. Doug had an article in maybe the last or the next to the last issue of *Drake* magazine about fishing on the Olympic Peninsula. His articles are just so honest. They're just so—they paint the picture just like it is, you know. It's not about big fish; it's not about a lot of fish. It's about the quality; it's about the natural experience. Selfishly I regret that I didn't get to know Doug better because he's got a really high character way of describing fly fishing.

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Who else? I guess, I guess for me, Bill and his son, John McMillan, are really the inspirations that I think a lot about relative to this sport because--I don't know if you've had a chance to look at their book or not, but it really reflects their philosophy about fish, about the environment, about the importance of fish in the environment. Plus they're a conduit to Haig-Brown. So of all the people that I know in the world of fly fishing, Bill and John are the two most influential.

TB: Nice. We did talk about that you like rivers; are you a wet or dry fisherman? Do you have a preference—anything about that?

BK: Oh man, I'd rather catch one fish on dries than 20 on wets. I don't know why. There's just something-- I just got back from Patagonia, and it was all dry fly fishing, and it was almost entirely sight fishing to big browns. So you see the fish, and you're trying to put the fly ahead of them so that they see it, but far enough ahead that they don't spook (and I mess that up way more times than I don't). But when you do get a good cast-- There's one I remember just so clearly, and I'll probably remember it forever, is the fish was facing us and I cast ahead of him, and he came up and looked at the fly and he dropped back. So I twitched the fly and he came up and he dropped back. And I twitched it and he came up and he dropped back. I twitched, and this time he came up with his mouth open. And I tell you, it takes all of the discipline you can possibly muster to not jerk that fly before he takes it and goes down. You know, you just-- And one moment like that is worth a hundred fish on a wet fly, for me. I know that's not true for everybody, but for me. Just that anticipation and the— And there's something about the elegance of a fly that's floating on top of the surface. It's just a fun way to fish.

TB: Okay, this is kind of my last question. Is there anything about fly fishing we haven't asked you? And then also, please brag or tell me more about yourself, because I don't know—I mean, I will ask you about Letcher Lambuth but—

BK: Well, you know I have another friend that's a fly fisherman and he's also a psychologist, Tim Berry is his name. We have great conversations. Well, Tim is writing a book on why we fly fish. He's interviewed people like Joan Wulff and Tom Brokaw. So he and I were talking about it one time, and he asked me, and he gave me time to think about it. I thought long and hard because it is an interesting question what—I mean, you see it, you see these people that come in here and they make stupid decisions because of fly fishing. It just takes over. I don't know, maybe golf is like that to some people or horseracing, I don't know, but man, there's just something about fly fishing that just grabs on to you. Why is that? Well, I tried to think about it, and I don't pretend to have the answer, but here's a thought. I think fly fishing intensifies relationships. For example, I could walk along a river and really enjoy and appreciate and respect the beauty of the river, if I'm a hiker. But if I'm a fly fisherman, when I walk along that river I'm thinking about things more deep than just the superficial appearance. I'm thinking about where might the fish lie? What kind of insects might live here? Is this stone fly water or not? I'm thinking about the currents and the flows and how I might place a fly so that I can get a drag-free drift to a good hold; temperature, where the river originated, fluctuations. So I'm thinking about so much more about that river than if I were just a hiker walking by, so it intensifies my relationship with that river. Does that make sense?

Also it intensifies in a big way your relationship to the people that you fish with. When you fish with somebody, you see them in a different environment. You see their values play out, in kind of a simple way. It's kind of a, I think sometimes kind of an insight into people. And I don't know if this is good or not, but I'm finding that today in retirement that most of the people that I like to be with, most of my friends, are fly fishermen. Part of that's because I get to know them better. But one of the most wonderful manifestations of intensifying your relationship with other people is when you can fly fish with your son or daughter. And when Tommy was about six we started fly fishing. We lived in Camas.
We used to like to fish Hosmer Lake in Oregon. It had Atlantic salmon in it. Being in the canoe, you didn't have to cast very far, so Tommy would sit in there in the bow of the canoe and I'd paddle our canoe around, and he'd cast to these fish. And we just had so much fun. We'd camp for the weekend and just be together without any other interruptions. We'd watch the otter play, and paddle the canoe around the lake. We fished other lakes too, Eastern Washington, seepage lakes for example. I'm convinced that it created a relationship between us, lines of communication that got us through the teenage years with relatively little angst. Then Tommy went off to college,

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graduate school, a job, career, family. He lives in Wisconsin, so we don't get to fish together very often. But every two to three to four years, we take a big trip, and this year Patagonia was our big trip, so he and I went there together.

TB: Nice. And it was nice you were actually able to instill that in your son. Some people have the opposite experience, I mean, their kids don't want to do what they—

BK: Yes, I don't know how that works, I don't know.

TB: And did your daughter—

BK: No, Kim doesn't fish but two of her kids are into the sport, one loves to fish and one loves to tie flies.

TB: Very cool, very cool. And some of the other things a little bit about, like the changes we've seen in fly fishing over time. I mean, you started out using a bamboo rod, what do you like to fish with now?

BK: When I started fly fishing, I started with bamboo, a real cheap bamboo. It was awful. And then as soon as I could afford it, went to fiberglass. And then, oh maybe in the mid-Seventies or so, to graphite, the first graphite, and now we have boron. And when I first started, we had—basically we just had floating lines and we had sinking lines. Floating lines were double taper, sinking lines were weight forward, and that's all we had and we were happy with them. Today we have all different kinds of tapers; we have all different kinds of sink rates. It's incredible, and I don't know that we need them all, but they're fun to play with them. Graphite rods were surely a step forward. These graphite-boron composites are wonderful casting tools, very efficient, very effective, and I like to use them. But you know sometimes there's nothing I like better than spending a day with a bamboo rod. Maybe it's not as efficient for the long casts, maybe it's a little bit heavier, maybe a little bit-- I don't think it's more tiring because-- I always had this sensation with the bamboo, and the reason I like them, they're very different, and it always takes me like 30 minutes to an hour to transition from boron to bamboo because there's such a difference in the feel. But I always have the sensation that with a bamboo rod, if I just get it started and then stay out of its way and let it dictate the timing, it'll just be a wonderful cast. It'll just lay down so nice. So there's something really pleasing about a bamboo. But when we go to Patagonia and we're fishing big flies, lots of wind, big water, you can't beat graphite or a boron, graphite composite. So I enjoy fishing them all depending on the conditions.

TB: Okay. Do you want to tell me a little bit about the Letcher Lambuth Award that you received in 2012? You just got it.

BK: Well, to be on a list that starts with Roderick Haig-Brown and then includes names like Gil Nyerges, Steve Raymond and Sid Glasso is a very humbling experience.

It was, as you know, they have two criteria. One of them is angling craftsmanship, and for that the nomination letter cited the boats. Then the other is contributions to fly fishing, and there they cited the presentations that I do, one in particular, a Golden trout presentation I've given six or seven times now to various clubs in Washington. It's always fun.

It's based on a trip that a good friend of mine, Cliff Schleusner, and I took about five years ago now. Cliff and I fish together and do a lot of backpacking together in the Olympics. And one time we were having one of these discussions, kind of I guess maybe like your bucket list discussion, and we acknowledged that neither of us had ever caught a Golden trout, and we'd sure like to catch a Golden. We discussed it further, we said, "You know what would really be cool to catch a Golden trout in its native waters." We know they've been transplanted all over the west, but I thought wouldn't it be cool to catch a Golden trout in the waters from which it's evolved. And all we knew at that time was that they evolved some place in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California. So we put a mark on the wall that a year hence or so we were going to do this backpacking/fishing trip to the Sierras to catch Goldens.

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So we started doing our research, and you know sometimes the research is half the fun, right? So we read books, we talked to people, we studied maps. One of the people we talked to is Ralph Cutter. I don't know, do you have any of his books? You should have. *Sierra Trout Guide* is one of his books. Oh, and another book that if you don't have it I'll get it for you, because it's really good, really thought provoking, breaks down a lot of old wives' tales. It's called *Fish Food: a Fly Fisher's Guide to Bugs and Bait*. It's based on research that he and his wife have done about what flies look like underwater, what the actual insects look like underwater, and how fish respond to them. It's really an eye opener. He spent I don't know how many but certainly many tens of hours underwater watching his wife fish. Anyway, we read *Sierra Trout*, which had good information on Goldens. But we still had lots of questions so we sent Ralph an email, and he wrote us back right away with great answers and great enthusiasm for us wanting to catch fish in their native water. He's an expert on the Sierras. So he gave us some terrific guidance.

So we took this trip. It turns out there are three subspecies of Goldens; and each of them lives in a different little corner of the Kern River or its tributaries. Each one of them off-road, and requires a good hike. So we planned this trip that turned out to be one of these trips that just everything—everything just works out so beautifully. The trip involved two weeks of hiking in the beautiful Sierras with lots of solitude, beautiful weather and those gorgeous wild native Goldens. And so we put it up into a presentation, and like I said, I've given it six or seven times now. It's always fun to give the presentation. The last time I gave it was just this year to the Hi-Lakers club in Seattle. If you can imagine, there is a club that is simply for fly fishermen that fish the high mountain lakes. And they've got a big membership, and they were really fun to talk with, very knowledgeable.

TB: Cool. So anything else about fly fishing I haven't asked you?

BK: You know you asked about people, and I overlooked a really important one, Gil Nyerges. You know Gil, he was here for Steve's reading. When we moved out here from Wisconsin in 1970 and Tommy and I started tying flies together, one of the first flies we learned to tie was a Nyerges Nymph. And when I was president of the club, maybe 2004, 2005, something like that, we were looking for speakers, and a friend of mine belonged to a club and they had just had Gil come talk to them. So he gave me the contact information, and we had Gil come over. I was so excited because this is the guy that designed the Nyerges Nymph. It's a terrific fly. It's very simple. Man, does it catch fish! There have been two or three occasions when it just stood out as being a terrific fish catcher. Well, to have the chance to meet the designer was really cool, right?

Well Gil just turned out to be just a wonderful fellow. He's just a prince of a guy. He's generous, he's artistic. I have three of his fly plates on my wall that I'm so proud to have. He's become a really good friend. And back to a point that I kind of alluded to before, you see, one of the things about fly fishing is, man, you get exposed to just terrific people. You see that, in your job here, people that come in: Steve Raymond—oh, what a talented guy. I had him come over and talk to us one time when I was president, and he stayed at the house, he and his wife. He's so interesting to talk to, about fly fishing, but about other things too, you know, those experiences— And just think, without fly fishing, I wouldn't have those—well I wouldn't meet those people. There again it comes back—what's the biggest thing about, it's the people and the intensified relationship because of our shared joy of fly fishing: John Alevras, same thing; Bill McMillan, absolutely.

TB: Very cool. If you don't have anything else about fly fishing, we'll shift gears, and I'll ask you about Western. And maybe just to make it easier, let's start a new tape.

Tape Two, Side One: The Western Story

BK: Well, Western has a pretty special place in my heart for a couple reasons. I graduated from high school in Oak Harbor. I was a very poor student in high school, barely had a C average when I graduated. When I graduated I could have got a job as a laborer or I could have joined the army or I could come to Western and party. So I chose the latter, figuring I'd do it for as long as it lasted, and then I'd go do something else; absolutely no academic motivations at all. My first quarter grades reflected that, they were terrible, and my second quarter grades weren't much better. I was just on the verge of flunking out, and I don't remember what the numbers were, but I had to get

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a pretty darn good grade point average in the third quarter to get my overall average above a 2-point so that I wouldn't get kicked out. And I really didn't care so much until in freshman English class I met this girl. This doesn't have anything to do with fly fishing, but I have to tell you how I met her. You can scrub it out, but this is-- True to form, I did a terrible job on an essay that we were supposed to write. And so the teacher comes in, not a very sensitive teacher, and he comes in a couple days after we turned it in, and he says, Okay, I got a couple essays here to read you, a good one and a bad one. Mine wasn't the good one. He reads it, and that's bad enough, but what really made it bad is he says, "Now Mr. Kindler, can you explain to us what you were trying to say?" Well, I was sitting in the back of the room where I always sat. I can't tell you how embarrassed I was. If I could have got the window open, I'd have jumped out. This was in Old Main. And I was stuttering and spluttering and red, and there's this young woman in the front of the class who turned around, and she gave me one of those smiles that says, Don't let this old guy bother you, you're okay.

Well, I fell in love. The skies, the clouds parted, the birds sang, the violins played, and I was in love right then and there. And I decided, well, if I flunk out I'll lose this girl, right? So I studied. Man, did I work. I just barely squeaked by. And then as it turned out that summer, I was working in a lumber shop, lumber store, loading lumber. It was the only job I could find. Just a week or two into the summer, Trudy called and she said that her dad's company was having a picnic, a company picnic, down on a Lake Washington, they lived in Moses Lake, would I come down and meet them. I was working in Oak Harbor, so I said, "Sure." So I went down Sunday and met her parents and had this perfect day. But her dad says," Look, he says, I just lost my bookkeeper. Would you like to work for me this summer?" I said, "Sure, when do I start?" And he said," Tomorrow morning." I said, "Great." I ran home, I packed my car, I take off. I get to Moses Lake at about 6 in the morning and go to a gas station, wash my face, brush my teeth, and go to work. So it was great to be with Trudy that summer. But the other thing that happened that summer was Joe worked at a—he was a supervisor of construction of a missile site, and he had engineers that worked for him. So I got to work with these engineers, and boy, these guys were doing cool stuff. I said this really looks interesting.

So when I came back to Western that fall, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, but my first year I was just taking business classes with no inspiration at all. So I thought, well, I'll change my major to science or engineering or something. I just started taking some science and math classes. I signed up for a chemistry class in that fall quarter, and my preparation was so bad, I couldn't even qualify for chemistry 101. I had to take chemistry 100 because I didn't take chemistry in high school. And who knows why, but boy, something connected there. For the first time ever in my life I got excited about school. I thought, wow, this stuff, this is interesting, this is exciting. Look how you can figure this out and do that and that. I changed my major to chemistry, went on to graduate school, got my Ph.D. in chemistry, started my career in chemistry. So that experience—I mean, who knows what would have happened had I not had that experience, right? One of those lucky breaks in life that--

Well, it turned out that the instructor's name was Dr. Eddy. And after I retired, I learned that Dr. Eddy had just passed away, and it bothered me that I had never told him of his influence. I should've told him that, right? So well, I can't do that, he's gone. The least I can do is I can go talk to his coworkers, you know, the other people in the chemistry department. So that was my first visit to Western since I graduated. And I met Steve Gammon—who was the department chairman at the time. And while we were talking, I glance up at his wall, and there's a fly rod hanging on the wall. So one thing led to another, and now Steve and I fish together on a regular basis. Trudy and I ended up sponsoring, funding a scholarship in Dr. Eddy's name. Just as a way of thanking Dr. Eddy and Western for-- I don't know how you can—how can you quantify something like that? How much that's enriched our lives. So Western is a big thing for us.

TB: So you already told us exactly how you decided to come to Western. Can you just go back and tell us your dates, your degree, and a little bit more, and then tell us a little bit about your first job after leaving Western?

BK: Let's see, I came to Western in 1960, the fall of 1960. I graduated in 1965. In my junior year here, a gentleman came by the name of Dr. James d'A Clark.

TB: Oh, right.

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BK: You know that name?

TB: We have two of his books in the Western Collection.

BK: Do you?

TB: Yes.

BK: Well Dr. Clark, a Scotsman, brilliant guy, very instrumental in the paper industry. He retired to Chuckanut Point. And Western gave him a research lab in the basement of Haggard Hall. He wasn't really a faculty member. I think he had a title of [research associate], but he didn't teach any classes, and he needed a lab flunky. So, I was cooking hamburgers at the time, Bob's Drive-In, if you remember Bob's Drive-In. And so this was a chance to work for Dr. Clark in the lab, better hours. So I took the job and it turned out to be a really good job.

Dr. Clark was a graduate of the Institute of Paper Chemistry in Appleton, Wisconsin. I really wanted to go to the institute. My grades weren't real good. They got better progressively through the years, but they still weren't really good. We planned on graduate school, Trudy and I did, and then I applied to the institute but I applied to several other schools too, because I didn't think I'd get into the institute. And we got accepted in the University of California at Riverside, so that's where I was going to go. I hadn't written my acceptance letter yet. And Trudy came home at Christmas and said, "Guess what? We're going to have a baby." So our first thought was well we can't go to graduate school then, and that was okay. But the more we worked on it and thought about it, well, maybe we should try, see if maybe we can get a fellowship. But Dr. Clark, because of his relationship to the institute, he taught there after he graduated, I think with his help I got admitted. And everybody at the institute gets a really nice fellowship. So, we went from Western then to Appleton to go to the Institute of Paper Chemistry.

A little side story, Dr. Clark didn't want me to get married, he thought that would ruin my career. So, when I went back that fall, my senior year after I got married the previous August, he said, "Now you and this girl of yours." I said, "Yes, we got married." He said, "Well, okay, I talked to my wife, she thinks I'm old fashioned. I guess it's okay." And he says, big old Scotsman, right, he looks down at me and he says, "For God's sake, son, don't have any children." And I said, "No, sir, of course not, not me." So he invites us to dinner before we leave for Appleton, the following year, and Trudy shows up 8 months pregnant. I guess I'd forgotten to tell him that--and he was not happy with that.

Well, Tommy was born just before we went to Appleton. Tommy went to Texas A & M, and when he graduated, he went to the Institute of Paper Chemistry. I always wished that Dr. Clark had lived long enough to know that, and I think he'd feel better then to know that Tommy went there. Okay, I got off the subject here.

So we went to the institute. Another great experience, really a nice place, and of course that's where I connected with fly fishing. That's where I picked up Rube Cross's book. Then when we graduated there, we went to work for Crown Zellerbach in Camas, in the research lab. That's where I met Bill McMillan of course, and we were there for ten years. In 1980, we went to Louisiana to work in a paper mill, terrific experience. We were there for five years, and then from there we were back to Camas for a couple years, then to San Francisco for seven or eight years, and then Stamford, Connecticut for several years, and then finally to Georgia for three years before I retired. I retired from Georgia.

I worked for Crown Zellerbach at first. In 1986, James River bought Crown Zellerbach, so I worked for James River, and then in 1996 I left James River and went to work for Rayonier Corporation, and I worked for them for two years in Connecticut and three years in Georgia.

TB: Oh okay, and they originally started out here, though. I just Googled it and—it's amazing what you can find out.

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BK: Yes, they started in Shelton.

TB: Okay. But that wasn't why you worked for them?

BK: No, in the mid-Nineties James River was undergoing some pretty major changes some of which were a bit unsettling. I got a call from a headhunter representing Rayonier. I was working for James River in Norwalk, Connecticut at the time and Rayonier was right next door to Stamford so it was easy to talk. We had several meetings and I finally decided to join up. It was a great way to end a career as a Rayonier is a first class organization.

TB: Okay. Backing up more to your experiences at Western; so when you were here, did you live in a dorm, with a family? Any favorite memories from outside of the classroom?

BK: I always lived in an apartment with roommates, cheaper, more party friendly.

TB: Okay, okay. And then you've already talked about Dr. Eddy; anybody else than who was a favorite or influential teacher?

BK: Well Dr. Clark-- huge, huge; another one of those pivotal experiences in life, right? How are we so lucky sometimes to have things like that happen to us?

TB: Okay. And you've kind of already talked about this a little bit too, but which classes did you like the best and/or learn the most from?

BK: I really liked chemistry. You know, I think about this quite a bit now; I'm really interested in the education process of K-12 especially, but college too. And I think a lot about the fact that when you study science or engineering, you learn certain frameworks or ways to think, disciplined structures for your thinking process. And for so many of us, like myself, I graduated, I have a PhD in chemistry, I worked in chemistry for maybe 5 to 10 years max, and then from then on what I did didn't really have much to do with chemistry. Is that education wasted? It's not, because the frameworks and the kinds of discipline structured thinking that you develop in science and engineering, why they really serve you well in business decisions, personnel decisions. I've always been grateful for my scientific training because it does extrapolate to so many other areas. I don't know if that makes sense or not.

TB: Yes, it does. Any other extracurricular activities that you enjoyed while you were at Western?

BK: Oh, many.

TB: Okay, do you want to talk about some of them?

BK: No, no. I got more serious as the years went on, but at first, as I told you, I was not a very serious student. Extracurricular activities were way more important than the curricular activities.

TB: Well you came at a really exciting time at Western because you came under Dr. Jarrett, who really kind of re-did campus, good and bad. A lot of faculty members kind of suffered under him in a sense that there had been a group of people that were more comfortable being a part of a teacher training institute, their teaching was just right for that. He was much more into developing a more liberal arts program. I don't know what a student picks up in that environment, but he's considered to be a really transitional figure—because Haggard had been here for 20 years. So you came when the Haggard building was new, but Dr. Haggard was gone, and we had a new president. Did you pick up on that energy, or students realize that?

BK: I'm afraid I didn't.

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TB: Any other outstanding memories of your college days?

BK: No, but you said I could brag, and I don't know that we want this in there, but a couple years ago I had an experience that was so exciting for me. It was such a thrill. My heart still beats faster every time I just think about it, because I was invited to give the commencement address.

TB: You're the 2011 Distinguished Alumnus, from the College of Sciences and Technology.

BK: I tell you-- I can't tell you, I cannot tell you how exciting that was. You know, like I said, Letcher Lambuth is so humbling, and I can't be more sincere in saying that. Just to be on that list, it just, well, to stand in front of those graduates, same thing.

TB: Okay. Well maybe tell us about that now since you are still working at becoming a real advocate for Western. You're on the—is it the College of Sciences and Technology Advisory Board or something? Could you tell us anything about the kinds of things that you are working on?

BK: Well, yes, you know, we have a new dean, and it's a big change. Arlie Norman was the Dean when I first reconnected with Western; in fact, his influence was one of the main reasons that I wanted to be involved with the university. He's just a wonderful man and a good friend. The new dean, Jeff Wright, has ideas of his own, and he's 100 miles an hour working hard to make things happen. Arlie created the college and built it into something that I'm so proud to be a graduate of. And now I think Jeff's positioning himself to take it to the next level, with the engineering. We now have an engineering technology program, and Jeff is committed to converting that to a full engineering program. Big change! Big step up for Western, difficult, hard, you know, there will be lots of angst in making that happen but God bless him that he's wanting to move us ahead. You know a couple or three years ago, there was a question about our computer science program. Do we even really need it? Should we just abolish it?

But now, it's just the opposite. Jeff's committed to quadrupling the number of graduates from our computer program, because it does such a good job, and because Washington desperately needs computer technologists, engineers and scientists, and Jeff's responding to that, to that need. It's all change, you know, it's all progress. I heard a guy speak, Peter Senge, last month. He wrote a book called *The Fifth Discipline*, in which—it's a really good book.

It came out in 1990, and I was working then, I read it. It was so profound, I tried to use some of it in my job because-- What he said was, it used to be that the organization that wins is the one that's the best at strategic planning. But then in the Eighties and Nineties, it became apparent that change was occurring so rapidly, you couldn't anticipate what it was going to look like, so you needed the flexibility to modify the plan in response to a changing environment. Therefore, the organization that wins is the one that's most adaptable. To be adaptable you have to be a learning organization.

Fly fishing, we're always learning, we're always humble students. Well, that's a microcosm of life. Remember it's the slope that counts, not the level, because the level's going to get transcended, so it's the slope that counts. That's what Peter Senge said. He used different words, but he said you got to be a learning organization. You have to be a learning individual. You have to develop the capabilities to learn. For the last 20 years, he's put all of his focus on K-12 education, and that's what it's all about, as far as he's concerned, teaching young people to be learners, giving them the wherewithal. That's why I love NatureBridge so much because we're teaching kids to think, to become learners. We're not teaching them the end. We're teaching them how to enhance their slope. Does that make sense?

TB: Yes.

BK: That was Senge's point, and that's what Jeff's doing, you know. That's what we all have to do.

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TB: Anything else about any of this that we haven't talked about that we should? And any thoughts about the future of fly fishing?

BK: Hey, there's a good question. I don't know, but Bill and John McMillan have an intriguing thought on that subject in their book, *May the Rivers Never Sleep*. They suggest that maybe in the future we're going to spend more time observing fish than trying to catch fish. So it would be less intrusive. We'd still have the pleasure of walking the stream, anticipating where the fish would be, interacting with the fish, but in a non-obtrusive way.

TB: Okay, well, I don't think I have anything else, so I'll say thank you very much. This has been a real thrill, and I will shut this off.

End of transcript

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