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Interviewees: Stephen Adams, Townsend Lathrop

Interviewer: Dan Hall

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Note: This transcript was reviewed by the interviewees and additional context in brackets was added.

Dan Hall: This is Friday, December 2, 1994. This is Dan Hall. We're with the Boone and Crockett oral history project, and today we're going to be talking with Steve Adams and Townsend Lathrop. Stephen, I'd like to begin with you and ask when you joined Boone and Crockett, who was your sponsor?

Stephen Adams: I joined in 1985, and my sponsor was Bill Spencer.

DH: Townsend, for you, when did you join the organization and who was your sponsor?

Townsend Lathrop: I joined 1985, and my sponsor was Bill Spencer.

DH: Let's start with your first meeting that you attended at Boone and Crockett.

SA: The first meeting I attended was an annual meeting in New York City. Would that have been...That would have been December of '84. I had met Bill Spencer earlier that year, and he invited me to come to this annual meeting of this organization called the Boone and Crockett Club, and that it was, the next, following annual meeting was in December. In fact, I had not met Towny. In fact, I met Towny in the limo being picked up at the hotel to go the natural history museum—the American Museum of Natural History in New York—where the meeting was. I believe that's the first time we met.

DH: What offices have you held since you've been in the Boone and Crockett, Steve?

SA: I think my first office was the chairman of the Ranch Management Committee which was actually a position within the foundation, the Boone and Crockett Foundation. I might have been...we had a structure within the Club that was somewhat ineffectual, officers and the Executive Committee members—I think I was an Executive Committee member or even an officer—but we had no job descriptions and really no function. At that time, the president of the Club ran the show, and the others were some...except for the secretary. Well, really the secretary was the only other functioning job. The treasurer wasn't functioning, and the other vice presidents really weren't functioning and really neither was the Executive Committee.

DH: Let's move right into the bylaws and the restructuring of the organization that you two

have been involved with over the last five years. Towny, would you care to kick that one off?

TL: On the bylaws?

DH: Right.

TL: Well, as Steve pointed out, it was very much, the organization had gravitated to meeting by Executive Committee. Even though the bylaws, the old bylaws, defined who was the Executive Committee, all the meetings were open meetings, and basically everything was being done by a president and by a staff. The committees were meeting once a year in reality, and even if there were multiple meetings during the year, the full committees only met in the December meetings and records were due [unintelligible] Conservation [unintelligible]. It became very evident as we were seeking to regenerate participation by members that we had to put some teeth into the structure. What occurred for where this organizational structure of the new bylaws came was that we did do, we found that some things were occurring and activities were starting to pick up during the time that Steve and I were involved with some, at the foundation level, really, that the Club was going in...was like a waking child. It was going a hundred directions at once, and frankly, our financial situation was sinking fast. It was very clear that we had limited resources and we were over stretching it. We were in real problems, and we were part of a group called the Transition Committee when we changed executive directors, that out of the Transition Committee, we were focusing on the fact that we needed to define our mission—where we were going. Because we were just completely running out of control, or else we'd lose it all. The old juggler thing? We were juggling eight balls, and we're only capable of five, so one of two things is going to happen—either three are going to fall, or all eight are going to fall. [laughs]

So, out of that we recommended that there should be a mission statement—mission policy review—and this was over a couple year period. It was during, I guess, your presidency, Steve, that it was determined that we would try to do it internally, led by Steve Mealey. Out of that, was once the mission statement was defined, there were subcommittees in it, and Lowell Baier led the study of the history of the Club. Very definitive, very good work, and Lowell had a very graphic chart, and he did it by decade. It was clear as a bell that when this club functioned at the committee level—its main activities—it was active, and that there was a direct correlation that as it centralized into the Executive Committee and centralized with staff, activity absolutely plummeted, in the quality of what it was doing. So, out of that was the idea that we had to create a structure, again using history, his study told us: create a structure that if you want—I hate to use the phrase, but it's a true phrase—push the activity level down to the committee level; create a reporting structure with these vice presidents with responsibilities. See, we wanted to create officerships that had real responsibilities: defined tasks, defined areas. And between chairs of committee and officers, we could get a very high percentage of the Club serving in specifically defined leadership [roles].

Right now we have 14 chairs and 17 officer directorship. That's 31 members if we don't have

any duplication that have a quote "job," so that's where it came from. It came out of that process. Then I, after the mission statement was written and everyone agreed to it, [was given the task of drafting new by-laws to formalize the proposed structure]. It was about a year, for me, really tough getting it done, the Strategic Planning Committee then met in the spring of '93? Because, okay, we adopted the bylaws last year in 1994. No, in the spring of '93, yeah, because we adopted them in '94. In the spring of '93, they met and finally decided what they wanted to do, and taking that as a blueprint, I wrote the bylaw structure. It was pretty easy once they told you where you wanted to go. I mean you just, you could write it, which we adopted last December.

DH: Two questions. First of all, who asked for Lowell's study, and with 34 jobs...is that what you said?

TL: Thirty-one now.

DH: Thirty-one jobs and 100 members.

TL: But the professionals can serve in those jobs, too. I'm not sure what our professional count is, but I think it's...There's basically 140 people that could, so even if it's 31 of 140, you've got close to a third with titles and defined offices.

DH: Okay, now who asked for Lowell's study?

SA: I think that came out of Steve Mealey's work on the Strategic Plan.

TL: There were five subcommittees that got created. We created five subcommittees in specific areas. One was to look back to the past, one was to inventory the present situation of the Club, then there were three others that were more like the future orientation. Lowell was on subcommittee one, and appointed by Mealey as chairman of subcommittee one to do the history.

SA: And he [Lowell] did a much more thorough job than anybody else did, but he was real oriented toward history and he took...He went all the way back and looked at minutes, initial minutes, and early records of the Club, and very much spent a lot of time.

TL: And had séances with Teddy Roosevelt. [laughs]

SA: Right.

TL: He presented this thing before anybody had really read it, and we were looking for a lot of credibility, he starts talking about that he had, as he was sitting up all night in Billings writing it, he was talking to Teddy around the dining room table. We're going, 'My God, I wonder what's in this thing.' [laughs]

SA: Teddy came out of the wall.

TL: He was talking to him, telling him what to do.

DH: That will lead us into the next topic we want to talk about, and that's this strategic planning process. Steve, can you tell me how that came about?

SA: Actually, it was part of this...let's see, Tim Hixon had become president of the Club, we were going through some...We were still experiencing these tremendous growing pains at that time. We were trying to raise money for the foundation, and get the Club reorganized. We were having problems with getting our staff in Dumfries [Virginia] to be more responsive to us. We weren't really sure what the problem was, but there just was a lot going on. A lot more members were becoming interested, but there weren't really jobs for them to do, or specific tasks for them to take on. I think, as I recall, Steve [Mealey], in one of the meetings that we had, volunteered and said that really what we need to do at this point is to determine who we are, and really what direction do we want to go before we go through this reorganization—before we go through rewriting the bylaws. He was exactly right, and so Tim gave him that assignment. It was about a two-year process as I recall, and—

TL: The amazing thing about it is when we set out, most people felt that we needed to hire a professional facilitator. People talked about how, in fact you, Steve, had mentioned about at American Farmland [Trust], you'd had a facilitator. Somebody else says, "You can't do this without an outside facilitator." Steve Mealey said, "Let's take a shot. What have we got to lose? If we lose six months, but save \$20,000, at that point, we'll save you \$20,000," [laughs] rather [unintelligible] bleeding profusely. We really, I think most of us set out on that with little faith that that was going to work, and yet it worked fantastically. The process itself, the fights and the arguments, it really was, to define yourself is one of the...to have 140 people define themselves is really quite a process. We'd fight over commas for two hours.

SA: But getting people to focus on really who the Club was. Why the Club was founded on the objectives of the original fathers, and going back to explore all these aspects was a tremendously educational process for all of us involved, learning about the history of the Club. Then it really put into focus what we really should be concentrating on.

DH: Were there hard feelings over this process?

TL: Sure.

SA: Oh, there were some, there were definite disagreements. I don't know that you would call them necessarily hard feelings, but there were some disagreements. I think there's still some rough edges that we're experiencing. In particular, with the Records Committee guys, the records, keeping of big game records had become the primary function of the Club since

probably the '50s—the '40s and '50s on. Because it seemed like everything else, the conservation efforts, although we did have a semblance of a grants and aids program, it was really not...it had no focus, no direction, and it seemed like most of the emphasis was on the records keeping. Most of the members who became members during that period of time became members because of the Club's reputation in records keeping. So, it somewhat perpetuated itself. So, when a lot of us newer guys who were really involved in this strategic planning process encouraged looking back and looking at the conservation heritage that the Club had, the records keepers of the Club, I think, began to feel threatened that not only was there another, a baby in the family, but in fact that their role was being diminished. That wasn't the case. We worked really hard to put them on an even keel with everything, but we just didn't...we felt that if we were going to go forward and go to the public and private institutions and private individuals to raise money, we were not going to be able to raise a penny based upon our Records Keeping reputation and programs. The only chance we had to go forward was as a natural resource conservation, with a natural resource conservation orientation. That mean rekindling the conservation heritage—the roots of the Club—and there were several of us that felt very, very strongly about that. So, maybe those strong feelings—not just maybe, but they did—they caused some hard feelings, or at least...I would say when I first became president three years ago, they were wondering...The question was, well, was Adams going to eliminate records keeping from the Club?

TL: The serious question during the planning, they all thought it's going to, this process is a way to get rid of records keeping, which it never was. I think, you could talk about rough edges or difficulties, it's not only to the strategic plan, but it's the general conduct of the Club. People are very strong in their opinions about what's important to them and what they're interested in. The only thing that's greater than that, I think, is the reverence that every member holds for the institution, and the feeling that being a member of this is a tremendous opportunity to be a temporary torchbearer. Obviously you could get very awestruck when you see who were members and what they did. You sit there and say, "You know, Teddy Roosevelt and me are members of the same thing." I think that as a result what occurred, and why it worked—it might not work somewhere else—but the reverence that every single person held is that we knew we couldn't turn anybody off. We basically said that if the forefathers did this, whether it's what I love the most or not, doesn't matter, we are going to do it. We are going to do it. Now, records came. It was not at the inception of the Club, even though there's a provision in the certificate of the corporation that would imply that scientific research and data was really the records was developed in the middle of the 1900s, but it was a function that became so important to the Club. And honestly, more people in America right now because of the sleepiness of our conservation activities for so long, know the Club for the book, and it was felt that, okay, whether you like it or not, that's what we're about. So, it was an amazing process of...I guess you fight tooth and nail from 10:00 to 5:00 to try to protect the turf [unintelligible], but when the final bell came, there was always consensus, because nobody tried to show up the other person. Even if it wasn't your most favorite area, nobody lacked respect for the other person's interests.

SA: I don't think there's been one person who's quit over this process, is there?

TL: No.

SA: I don't think so. I think you had some people who were not involved when we started five, six, seven years ago who just dropped out, but they weren't involved in that process then. But I don't think there was anybody who was really involved, really that was an active member when we started this process, that dropped out.

TL: Well, a little bit of that...There had been some pre-work in that, I guess in '86 or at the latest '87, I'd take over the chairmanship of the Admissions Committee, and basically changed the process for admissions in...Well, in that we looked at it, and if you read the certificate of incorporation, there's nothing but action words in it: to promote, to do, to do. So, clearly, the forefathers with 100 members contemplated an activist organization. What had happened is that it had become anything but an activist organization. I mean, I'm sure you interviewed Bill Spencer, and the ranch thing was as he looked around and said it had turned into a dinner club. What happened was that we started, first off, looking at who were active and who weren't. I did a survey of the last seven years of attendance at meetings, and we went to the Executive Committee and said, "Hey, if somebody hasn't been here in two years, we shouldn't use their letter to promote somebody."

SA: Sponsor a new member.

TL: They said, "You're right." So, by not being active, because people begot themselves. It was very simple when you looked at the thing, and you could point to a group...I mean, these four people showed up on five applications. The same four people were on five people's applications.

SA: And those new five were not active

TL: They weren't going to do anything, yeah.

SA: And the other four were not active.

TL: I mean, it's a standard. Cancer grows. So, what have you got to do? You've got to stop it, so everyone agreed, so we started that. Then we passed a requirement that if you don't attend a meeting in two years, you're out. We haven't enforced it yet, but that got passed. So, with those two going, the message was very much out that you had to be active and involved. We started the ranch meetings, too, and I mean, it's unbelievable to watch, and even in our time period, the increase in the count of people that went to the ranch from ten, to the next year 19. Now, we get 30 members at the ranch meetings, and those are pretty hard travelled meetings. We found, I think, in looking at it, anybody that goes to the ranch is totally an activist afterwards, whatever their area is. There's something about it, and I guess that it was a touchy-

feely thing that they could see for the first time. So, as we entered the strategic planning process, they're already...if you'd done it five years earlier, maybe some people would have dropped out. Some people are dropping out because of the participation requirement. There are. Some guys recognized right away that they weren't getting their people in, and they all knew what was going on and because of the pronouncements and reading the minutes, they said, "This isn't what I joined. I joined a dinner club. I'm resigning. There was. But that predated. So, by the time we got, as I say, to that process, I think that that part of the metamorphosis had already started.

SA: Yeah, I don't think it was the active members who were actively going through the process, this process of change, and even though there were strong feelings on different sides, those who were strong enough to make their feelings heard, they stuck with the process. They stuck through the process, and are still here today. They still fight for what they believe for, and there are going to be maybe others that feel on the opposite side, too, but I think that's part of the dynamics of the organization as well.

DH: Let's move into this, the professional program. What I'd like to especially talk about is not only the development of the professional program, but also the inclusion of women. How has that changed the Boone and Crockett?

SA: The first part of that is the professional program which, I think in the early '80s, they were called associates. They had been called associates from the inception. We decided we wanted to create another category that would allow rank and file hunters or sportsmen or conservationists to become affiliated with the organization, and so we changed the name of associates to professionals—to professional members—and then created a new category called Boone and Crockett associates. Anybody could become a Boone and Crockett associate. No membership requirements; you pay \$25 a year. Now we're up to about 2,500-3,000 or so associates. Now the, the old associates who became professionals was the group that was initially established to not be the regular members. They could not vote, but that was really the only distinction they had to be—

TL: They didn't have the trophy requirement.

SA: That didn't have a requirement—

TL: For taking three male species in North America.

SA: And they were kind of seen as the—

TL: The think tank.

SA: Yeah, the professionals. These guys were the wildlife biologists, and the guys that had to work for a living whereas a lot of the Club members, early Club members, frankly, they were

either...Not that they didn't have to work, but they were definitely the white-collar crowd versus the blue-collar crowd. Maybe that's a better description. Dues were less, didn't have to pay as much in dues, or I don't know what—in the early days, all the other expenses—but definitely dues were less, have always been less for professional members. But it's also been a very great source of additional strength to the Club because a lot of the foremost leaders in wildlife management and wildlife biology have come from this group. Whereas the early regular members were senators, and the Teddy Roosevelt, the Roosevelt family, and George Bird Grinnell, and a lot of these type folks: explorers, and generals, and cabinet members, and so forth. Like I said the working, the blue-collar, and a lot of the hard work was done by these professional members, what we now call the professional members.

TL: In 1988, there was an act of revitalization of the professionals. It had gotten again quiet as the Club had quieted down on conservation. They weren't called on and their opinions weren't solicited, and I think they felt very alienated. In 1988, with the election of George Bush, due to some very close connections to President Bush from Club members—Tim Hixon and others—Lowell Baird really got the...I believe it was Lowell, or maybe some of the guys talking to Lowell, the professionals, got the idea that we have this resource, and we, the administration, was not strong in the conservation and environmental area and that they revitalized the professionals and they wrote like a total ten-point, ten-area conservation program for America. Through Charlie Long, a member who ran Citibank's governmental relations and his contacts, that plan was presented to the Secretary of the Interior and to White House people. That process—they ended up not doing anything with it—but that process got the professionals going again. Then we got Steve Mealey and some other people, and as we got to picking a professor—and the role of the professor focusing—that the professionals have really picked up again and we're trying to pick them up. Also, the professionals had fallen into very much, as they would say this, this inner beltway of professionals, and the thrust lately is how to get all across the country professionals. We've also changed a little bit of insight recently. We realized that when you read the definition of professional, it's anybody with a talent. To give you an example, we use that category, instead of everyone thinking it was just biologists and stuff, well, we took in a person who has been extremely instrumental in putting together all our financial controls and everything. He was a professional because he's a chief financial officer of a company. That's a professional task that we needed, because god knows that we were out of control. Recently, in looking at professional is anybody that's got a talent we need. If we've got a leak at the building, I guess we could call a plumber a professional because he can help us. That's a little bit of a shift in it, but that goes back to what it was always conceived of. So, there was that moving in...Lowell in that program really got that going again in '88.

SA: What he did, he went back to a lot of the older, I say older, guys that have been professional members for some time, and had somewhat a reputation for, primarily within the beltway-type reputations, to put together this white paper for the President. Because as you recall, Bush ran on that he was going to be the conservation president, and we had some overtures that in fact the Boone and Crockett Club could play a very big role in his administration, possibly, so could we give—

[Break in audio]

—had some close connections within the new administration. But it was interesting, the fact that those guys who got together to put together this white paper, as I recall...I remember after I read that, we were just new members then and trying to feel our way through, all this was put together without...I wasn't even aware that it was being done until it came out. But I remember there were a couple of items, of those items, that had already been accomplished. I could tell, I said, well, these guys, although they no doubt were sharp, they really weren't that attuned to what was going on. Then from there with the reenergizing of the Club, and bringing Hal Salwasser coming on board as the Boone and Crockett professor and with his contacts, good, qualified professional, potential professional members around the country, we have increased those ranks here significantly in the last couple of years and bringing on board people who are sure enough attuned to the latest in, not only from the political arena, but from the scientific arena as well.

TL: We actually now have an outreach, a proactive program to identify and to enlist or convince professionals to join, so instead of waiting for them to come to us, we're actually through Hal and some others, that they say, "These are the people"—like a list of 10 or 15 people—"that we ought to get," then we're actively trying to put together...Because again, you only get in by people proposing it, and it's very difficult with the number of people in the geographic spread of this Club to get four people that can write knowledgeable letters about an individual. So, it's not that easy sometimes to get it done, and it is extremely important that this is...I mean, you have to be proposed by members. Somebody tries to get in skipping members or writing a letter. You know a member and we don't give out the book. I mean, "You know members. Go talk to them." That's a little bit in the area of the women. You asked that question.

DH: Has that changed the perception that this is a fraternity club?

TL: I think it's changed the perception that it's an all-male club. [laughs]

SA: I think within ourselves, it meant a lot, although even to ourselves it's still a bit of tokenism. I mean, we really haven't had...we wanted to get members in. Towny and I worked real hard on this aspect, and in fact, it didn't happen until I became president.

TL: Well, a little bit, Steve, I mean if there was a focal point to the Club as to why we had to deal with this issue as all of society was presented with the issue, if we're going to expand the conservation program the way we would like to, and if in that theory we were going to go to foundations, and possibly even public sources of funding, in this day and age, it didn't matter whether you were discriminatory, if you appeared to be discriminatory...It was basically, the only way you could prove you weren't, and maybe this is justifiable, the only way you could prove you weren't was to be able to show a membership roll that clearly and empirically

demonstrated you weren't. So, that was kind of a surface reason to say...It was even brought to a head when there was talk that George Bush was going to come to the ranch. Basically, I remembered at the time because I had worked in politics and stuff, I said, "He's never coming to the ranch."

They said, "Why?"

I said, "Because somewhere about question nine by the White House advance team is going to be 'Do you have any women members?' and when you say, 'No, but we don't discriminate,' they can't afford the press. They're going to say, 'Thank you very much.' Numerous foundations you're going to apply to, they're going to say, 'Do you discriminate?' 'No.'" 'Do you have any women members?' 'No.'" 'Forget it. You discriminate.'"

In fairness, that was a very practical thing that is occurring, but I know personally for myself, and this was a very big issue for me, I got involved because Bill Spencer was my godfather, and I very fortunately, instead of asking for a television when I graduated from college, I asked to go on a hunting trip with Bill. I got very interested in it, and then I heard about Boone and Crockett, I knew it meant a lot to him, and I got exposed to it. Then to be given the opportunity to work in this organization was quite something. My first two children were daughters, and when I had held my daughter, I called my wife that night, she was still in the hospital, and I said, "You know the world's changed. You handle femininity ; I'm going to train my replacement." I felt very strongly, as you looked around society, most of the doors have been broken down, and they should be. I mean, if people are of equal capabilities, what's the difference of what sex they are?

I, looking down the road, was very concerned that if my daughter got interested in shooting and hunting, and picked up the fervor for conservation, and was exposed at home to the things that this club was doing because she took an active interest in things I was interested in, then it would be such a terrible tragedy if she was a very talented person that she couldn't get in just because she was a woman. So, I was somewhat personally motivated, the thing of raising them...And again, I thought it cut off, when you're looking for activists and you're looking for good people, I think you're really dumb to cut off 50% of the available pool of people. As a result, looking at the situation, and as I said personally motivated, the need, the interest for the money, the interest for the President to visit was a way that the whole issue—it wasn't emotional to anymore to the members, you could say, "Here's why you've got to do it. Here's why we've got no choice." Now there were some people that were very unhappy. Yes, they had conceived of this as a men's dinner club.

SA: There were stronger feelings about that than there were about the strategic arguments over the strategic plan or the importance of Records Committee. There were much stronger feelings.

TL: Unbelievably controversial. But we did it very carefully, and again, to get this thing done

with 100 people, we can't afford too many 51:49 votes. I mean, you'll just tear this thing apart in two seconds. So, what we did is very carefully as we were using this as a focal point, we would keep debating the issue of should we do this, should we do this. This dragged on for a year, year and a half.

SA: Couple of years, actually.

TL: I think at any point after about the first three months, we could have held a vote and we could have had a majority, but I think we might have lost a ton of members. You can't ram something down these people's throats. They're very successful people, and it's hard enough to get them to take orders since they've been giving them all their lives, but especially, you turn them off real fast if they lose. So, you wanted to get them there. You wanted to keep building a consensus of why this was good, and we finally culminated in that we talked about doing the women, and then the final key, because remember...I should preface, in election process, a professional is elected by a majority vote of the Executive Committee at a meeting. That's it. Okay, it's over. A regular member, the unanimous vote of the Executive Committee submits that person to balloting of the general membership. Six negative votes precludes. Okay. Now, we were talking, there's activism going on, but there were 20 or 30 people that weren't attending any meetings. They're sitting out there, so you don't even know how they feel on the women issue. If you went in the direction of taking a woman, you absolutely couldn't have her voted down. I mean, the pressure was to know that they weren't going to lose, because you wanted to talk about proving we weren't discriminatory, all you'd have to show is we nominated a woman and she got shot down. [laughs] I mean, it was one of those real dangerous situations; there was no middle ground. So, in looking at that, what we did is the final step before we brought any women was in the San Antonio annual meeting, when Tim Hixon went out and Steve came in as president, the Executive Committee was asked to authorize the Membership Committee to ignore a blackball that was based on sex. That that was not a legitimate ground. Now, it was very controversial, because a lot of people said, "We don't discriminate," so to pass that almost implies that we do. I said, "I understand that, but I need that because if there's a blackball, we go back to determine why." Like, "What do you know that we didn't know about this individual or we hadn't found out?"

SA: Was this person a poacher? Had they violated some game laws?

TL: Yeah. Because it's very simple, we may have missed something, and so even if you only had one blackball, if somebody told you, "Well, I know the guy poached over in Tennessee two years ago, and I can prove it," then the Membership Committee can say, "Wait a sec, hey, Executive Committee, we gave you a bum steer," so you would investigate. What we did, though, was important. I said, "I need this stated because if we're going to investigate these blackballs and we establish this, I just want clear that nobody can argue that that wasn't legitimate to ignore that blackball." We got that. They agreed unanimously.

Then what we did is, originally—again the fear of those six blackballs for four members out

there in the hinterland—tried [initially] to get through the professional community, professional women, because we could do it at a meeting, knowing the situation in the room, if we had a problem it could be addressed before that meeting was over, and I figured, professionally. Six months goes by, we don't get a...Then we're very fortunate that a couple of members called up almost simultaneously knowing two women [who wanted to be members]. This woman would be interested, and this woman would be interested. What we did is we did [proposed] two women at once, because you can go in a field and shoot a deer, and say it was an accident, but if you shoot two deer at once, it's pretty clear [laughs] that you were shooting at the deer. So, what it would do was it would give you empirical, I mean...and it wasn't any point in shooting one down if you didn't shoot them both down. What it did was when there were two blackballs against both girls, phone calls were made. "Excuse me, would you tell me what you know about her?" Well, it was Pat Auld and Joan Payson "What do you know about Pat that I don't know? Why did you vote against Pat?" No answer. "So what do you know about Joan that I don't know?"

SA: Virginia.

TL: Virginia, excuse me. So finally, it came to a point of saying, "Look, really you voted against them because you don't want women."

"Well, yeah."

In reality, I will tell you, because I handled the process, that both were elected without ignoring blackballs. It was close. There were the number, on one. The other was on the borderline, but three people when you finally talked it out with them said, "I really don't know these individuals. You're right. Whatever my feelings are, it's wrong, and I want to switch to abstaining." So, they were properly elected again, but it was dicey. But again, it was something that, I guess, because of needing the outside money, potentially from the foundations or wanting, it gave very good things, I said that somebody could touch that no matter what they felt about it, they realized that practically for the Club, it had to occur the day...I mean, it was just society won't letting you.

DH: You both came into the organization at essentially the same time, and into offices at the same time. Were these problems that you'd expected, and you knew you were going to have to face when you came into office?

SA: I tell you, when I had become a member, I didn't even know what Boone and Crockett Club really was. In fact, I just thought frankly that it was a dinner club. Although Bill Spencer had told me about the heritage of the organization somewhat, and I was given a book to read as a new member, I still didn't grasp the full perspective of the organization and so I really didn't. Then, too, there was no, the organization was so unstructured, and as I recall, I for two or three meetings, and at that time, it seemed like I tried to make the meetings, but I'd made about three of the first five meetings or so. I was having a hard enough time just trying to remember

names of the members, and I just, I still didn't really have a clue of what was, really, what everyone was trying to do. What the president was trying to accomplish.

DH: When you became president—

TL: Well, there's a step before that, Sorry to interrupt. It really occurs, things are going along, say the normal pace, and yes, activity level in the Club had picked up after 1987, but it hadn't picked up all that much. Steve was functioning over, head of Ranch Committee at the Foundation. I'm over here at Club in Admissions, and then I was made assistant treasurer also, and it was a great job. I never even got the books. I'd call up the treasurer, and say, "Is there any chance that I could see the financial statements?" I'm not sure the treasurer ever saw the financial statements. [laughs] But I was two years as assistant, and it was typical of these, as Steve was saying, offices meant nothing, I get nominated assistant treasurer, go over to the treasurer and say, "Hi, I'm the assistant treasurer."

He says, "Great."

I said, "Is there anything I can do?"

He says, "I'll be in touch," and the next function I had as assistant treasurer was to be nominated again next year as the assistant treasurer again. I'd go over to the treasurer again, and said, "Hi, remember me?"

He says, "Oh, yeah, you're the assistant treasurer."

I said, "Any chance we're going to talk this year?", and he goes—

But then what happened was the Chicago annual meeting, and at that point, I guess I was on the board of the Foundation. We go to the meeting, and I get tricked first.

SA: '89.

TL: '89, was it? '89, okay, in Chicago. I get tricked first that the then sitting president says, "We don't have a treasurer. Towny, you be treasurer." All of a sudden.

I said, "Hey, this is great. I've been assistant treasurer and haven't done anything."

I said, "Look, you make me the treasurer, but what it is, is the assistant treasurer of the Club will be the treasurer of the Foundation."

Everybody goes [snaps fingers], "Great idea, let's do that."

Then he goes, "Oh, I resign as president."

Let me back up. They'd been trying to raise the money, they'd gotten to the point they'd paid off the ranch, they had about 300,000 on the chair at the University. The prior year, they had no money, nothing had been raised except for a large contribution at the end of the year by Tim Hixon because he was embarrassed that we weren't doing anything, and literally two weeks before the meeting sent in a check for \$120,000. That was it. I think they'd raised 2,000 other dollars. One good thing that had happened during that year is—and Bob Palmer was the president [of the Foundation]—he had gotten Deloitte in, and finally had... [an independent financial audit financial] They didn't have any books even for this thing—they were trying to raise money—but Bob announces, "I'm not president." He kind of turns to the guy next to him, and he says, "You want it? You be president."

"No, I'm too busy to be president." I'm sitting there, going, 'Oh no, lock the doors. We aren't leaving this room with me supposedly going out to raise a couple of million dollars and no president.' I said, "I couldn't explain that to anybody that we didn't have a president." So we were going around the table: How about you? No, no, no. All of a sudden, I go, "Steve, you're chairman of the Ranch Committee, what better person to represent us in trying to raise the money than a guy that knows every rock and tree on the property?"

I'd never even been to the ranch at that point, and Steve goes, "Oh no, not me."

I go, "I'll make a deal with you. I won't leave office until you do. If you'll be president, I'll be treasurer." [laughs]

He says, "I'll only do that if Rocky Dixon will be chairman of the Ranch Committee."

Rocky goes, "Yes."

I said, "Wrap the package up."

We come out of that, and during the next two years, totally are faced with the most near term problem. I guess we came into the worst jobs at this point, because the big monkey on the back of the Club to get it going was funding the conservation program, and two dummies ended up...Even that day, we're sitting there in the afternoon, and looking at one another and going, "What have we gotten ourselves into?" Out of that—and some other things occurred at that meeting—but one of the first things, I turned to Steve and I said, "Steve, this fundraising has been a screaming success."

He goes, "What are you talking about?"

I said, "Well, we've raised so much money, that no longer do we care about the half a million, that's left to finish the chair," I said, "we need three million dollars."

He goes, "Why?"

I said, "Because we're going to declare we're successful."

Out of that, okay, for the next two years, because we were running separate management structures of the Foundation and the Club, and it was originally...We didn't do this. We inherited this, but they started losing sense of this. The Foundation would meet, and then right after that at the same meeting, the Club would meet. Well, at the head of the table for the Foundation is Steve Adams, Rocky Dixon, and Towny Lathrop. Then we get up and move away, and then the older members come in as the Club, but what happens is we get a program going, and we start having—because Tim allows us to keep the money—all of a sudden, we've got more money than the Club's got and we're running into a staff problem. People were very unhappy with the staff support in those days, predominantly with the executive director, but nobody did anything about it. It was just straight osmosis, just let it keep going, and it was really us that focused everybody in that and saying, "I mean, in all honesty, this doesn't work."

DH: I don't mean to interrupt here, but you said about staff support, are we talking—

TL: Boone and Crockett staff at that point.

DH: We're talking about the people working—

TL: Dumfries.

DH: The paid staff out at Dumfries in particular.

TL: Right.

DH: Okay, I just needed clarification there.

TL: Because what was occurring at that time—and this has been aired by a number of us previously—that you go to a meeting and everyone would get all pumped up, and you'd discuss all these great issues, and you'd come back to the next meeting, and it was the same issues, and nothing had happened in between to deal with the issues. A lot of people felt, if Steve Adams at a meeting says, "I'll do that," he should be getting a phone call on Monday or Tuesday, "Steve, Hal Nesbitt, how do we help you do that?"

But in reality, Hal Nesbitt was always saying, "I think that's a bad idea. Let's not do that." So, we started saying, this staff thing is not working. At an event in Chicago of raising some money, there was an individual that had helped do that and was perceived by many people as nirvana for us, Larry Meanes, so at a meeting in Chicago of a number of people—a lot of people—it was decided to hire Larry. We ended up making some other...Okay, but that's the next area that starts causing problems. Believe me, we had economic problems before, our great chase of an

executive director really helped on economic problems.

These issues are popping, and then as I mentioned before, when we did this transition is where we started seeing the activism, So, in the course of that first year in the Foundation thing, I think we started a lot of, or a lot of the things came...They weren't there, then they got there in that course of that year as we were trying to meet our responsibilities to raise the money. Again, in Chicago the success in the Cody exhibit totally energized the Club, there's no question. I mean, people walked out of there just flying high and all this. Now, everyone wanted to do things. Everybody wanted to get going. So, a lot of the problems, a lot of the issues...When we took the offices, no, you didn't foresee them, but they were a natural, I think, extension of the reawakening that had started in '87—the very process Spencer and the people put in motion. We're sitting here today, it's 1994; that's 1986-1987. Really, people lose sight of that's not that much time, and if there was an infancy stage and the baby was crawling, we walked into the adolescent stage [laughs] where unfortunately, the baby was running and didn't know where it was going.

SA: Before Towny and I were thrown into the middle of this, we had had one major fundraising effort, and we'd hired a fundraiser out of New York, professional fundraiser. I remember having a meeting at the Teddy Roosevelt birthplace in mid-town New York, with this guy, our consultant. He tells us how we're going to raise this million dollars for the professorship. Well, from that, nothing happens, I don't know if there's 10,000 that is raised from the process.

TL: By him?

SA: Yeah.

TL: The professionals, I don't think raised...The hired professionals didn't raise a dime.

SA: I don't think so.

TL: The members raised it. Contributed or raised it.

SA: Yeah, and so, anyway, after this meeting in '89, when we get thrown into the deal, it's very obvious that...In fact there were no files. I don't think there was anything that the Foundation had. Bill Searle, who said, "I'm going to send you my files," he had been the president before Bob Palmer, he'd been the first president of the Foundation. Well, I get his files, and they were basically, he'd written some letters to some people asking for money, and hadn't gotten anything. There was nothing. There was no annual report, no report of what...no pictures, no nothing, no brochure. But what had happened, we had raised—primarily Bill Spencer—had twisted some arms completely off, and had raised two million dollars to buy this ranch. From about—

TL: And started the professorship [unintelligible].

SA: And started the professorship. A quarter of a million dollars to start the professorship.

DH: Now, let me interject here, this is the second time this has come up, the professorship. I need a clarification here. We're talking about Hal Salwasser's position at the University?

TL: Right.

DH: How'd that come about?

TL: Part of their initial plan. That was before us. They determined when they did the ranch that the concept was to create the living laboratories, the sustainable multi [unintelligible].

SA: This was Bill, Bill and John Haines.

DH: Right, right. Just a clarification for continuity of thought. I didn't mean to interrupt you, go ahead.

SA: I guess the point that I was making and I was trying to address actually, one of your questions a lot earlier which was, "Did you realize what you were getting into?" or something like that. My point was there was nothing. There was nothing. There wasn't even a good record—

TL: There wasn't even smoke on the horizon to give you a warning.

SA: But part of the problem was our staffing. Going back to the staff, I called the staff and said, "Send me all of the records of who has contributed money," and it was a real rag-tag deal. Well, fortunately, from a record-keeping standpoint, there hadn't been very many people that had sent money, so I didn't have to go and dig too far back before I could establish, okay, I've established then who had given money to date. That included, most of that included this two million dollars that was raised by the ranch. A million-eight to buy the ranch, and a quarter of a million dollars for the professorship, and another couple of hundred thousand to buy equipment and cattle and so forth. Now, I'm not trusting the staff, so I proceed to set up my own organization, or my own file within my own personal office—

TL: Well, can I interject something, too? One of the reasons we didn't trust the staff, and I don't know if anybody...Harold Nesbitt did not like the ranch. He didn't want any part of the ranch. I mean, he thought it was a disaster because what the problem was was Harold Nesbitt had a nice little operation going, that he sold enough books, and sold enough things to basically cover his raise every year. He saw the ranch as the big problem, because it could ruin this nice little thing. So, he was not very willing to help the Foundation stuff. It's important. Anyone will tell you, I mean, clear as a bell, Harold didn't like the ranch.

SA: Well, I didn't know that. At that time, I didn't...the information wasn't there. I didn't know why it wasn't there. I didn't know that Hal didn't like the...I mean, I couldn't...All this was so new to me. But I did know that I wasn't getting the right information, so I thought the only safe way to do it is to keep it myself. I just started doing everything as it pertained to the Foundation through my own private office and not running anything through the Club's office, because I couldn't get any letters, I couldn't get them to write any letters anyway. I even printed on stationery, got some letterhead that had the Foundation—the Boone and Crockett Foundation—on it, had the directors, and it was even at the point of designing our own separate logo.

TL: And that's when you got everybody ticked. [laughs] The perception got that we were starting our own club.

SA: Then we got our hand slapped.

TL: It was great.

SA: And it was a real interesting, actually, kind of a fun deal. Because what happened, we had a couple of meetings, and I had passed out some reports that nobody had ever received before. "Here's where we are from the fundraising standpoint. Wow!" So, it showed that we had made progress. We had raised two million dollars, and we weren't complete dummies and there had been some neat things—

TL: Well, can I interject, Steve, a little bit? I had a background in fundraising, working in politics, and working as, actually on Presidential Finance Committee. Steve and I talking very early on, by February we had realized that to kick this thing off, we had to get a match challenge. Steve went to the Searles and got the \$500,000 match challenge, so that was over here. Then we had something to say, "Hey, you give us some more money." We started Steve contacting foundations, and we started a program. We really knew we had a problem, and we addressed it, and we were addressing it internally. Steve was doing everything, and a little bit, I guess I theorized some of the stuff. He was doing far more than I was. But the Foundation was functioning on its own. Without Dumfries staff support, we were beginning—

[Break in audio]

DH: This is tape two of our interview with Steve Adams and Towny Lathrop, and Steve, you were just about to start in with an incident where you got your hand slapped with the Foundation.

SA: Towny was describing a bit of the process. What happened was, in going to Bill Searle and Wes Dixon—the Searle family, the members who are within the club—saying, "So you guys threw me into the middle of this deal, now, help me out. Now, give me something with teeth in it that I can go back and challenge." So, it was this challenge that for every three dollars that

was raised, they would throw in a dollar.

TL: Up to 500,000.

SA: Up to 500,000.

TL: Up to a total of 500,000.

SA: That meant a \$2 million total deal. Well, okay, that was something to go back. Then like I said, I started producing stuff, and so it looked like there was activity.

TL: Then the September meeting came at the ranch.

SA: Then the September...So, I'm trying to do all these real positive things, and show a lot of growth and action or activity, and that's what I was feeding on this encouragement. People saying, "Wow, Steve, that's great. Things are beginning to happen now." Well, like I said, printing our own stationery, and I'm writing letters, and people are getting correspondence. People hadn't gotten correspondence within the Club before, and asking people for this and that. What was the situation, Towny? We were in the meeting—

TL: The logo was what really triggered it.

SA: It was the logo.

TL: And Steve, Rocky and I are sitting up—it's a U-shaped table at the ranch—and we're sitting up at the end conducting the meeting.

SA: Making our report.

TL: All of a sudden, totally by surprise out of nowhere, is just this accusation like we've created this separation: you're creating your own organization, you work for the Club, what is this stuff? It finally it was really Bob Palmer that came up and said, "Wait a second, these guys didn't do it. We did it way back when, when we wanted to create the separation." Well, at the end of this meeting, I mean, if you can imagine, we were a little bit in shock, but Rocky, Steve, and I sitting there that night look and said, "Isn't this fantastic? These people are mad! They care!" We couldn't even get phone calls in June. To have your wrist slapped, I mean we were all kidding, "This is the greatest thing that ever happened! They smacked us. They care about what we're doing! They told us to get in line." That fight continued, because I tell you the next permutation of it is when we hired Salwasser, all of a sudden, some of that old guard professionals—the beltway guys—were totally threatened by him, because now obviously he was going to become the focal point, or, this is again opinion, he was going to become the focal point of the conservation where they had been the gurus. They started saying, like he comes to a meeting, and these professionals pipe up and said, "What are you talking about? You don't have anything

to do with the Boone and Crockett Club. You're the Foundation professor."

We're going, "What are you talking about?"

Literally, he was totally insulted at a meeting twice, "You shut up. You work for the Foundation. You don't have anything to do with the Club."

We're sitting there and we're going, "What is going on?" But it was very funny, and subsequently, what we did is, Steve becomes president of the Club, because at the end of the two years, and Tim was going out, said, "Look, everyone's concerned about separate management structures, like there's a coup over here. Very simple—we'll mirror the management structure so that there's no questions anymore, so the president of the Foundation is the president of the Club."

We kept telling him, "Look, the Foundation is nothing but a tool. It's set up so you can segregate to outside sources the use of their funds. I mean they can track it through and know it's not going to our dinners." I mean, it was really bizarre when these guys went ape over this thing, and you sat there and said, "I just worked for you fellows. I mean, what is this?"

DH: Well, what was Hal's reaction to—

TL: He was pretty upset.

SA: Now, of course, he wasn't at the meeting. That meeting, the first meeting, Hal wasn't there. I mean, that was before—

TL: No, that was part of the strategic planning process. I forgot that. It was that day at the American Forestry Association when Washington as one of the committee meetings on the [unintelligible] where Hal...You left.

SA: No, I was there.

TL: Yeah, you were at the first one, but then I had to call you later and I said, "Do you know what they did to Hal?"

SA: Oh, yeah, they did it again. They did the same thing. But at that first meeting, when we first got our hands slapped, that was way before Hal was there.

TL: Yeah, they hadn't hired the professor yet.

SA: That was in '89.

TL: What we did is we were raising some money, and then we felt that it was important to the

fundraising process to have the professor in place. We got an agreement from the University of Montana that we could hire, make the selection, because it was going to be a lag time between the selection process and starting work and all that. So, they did the review process, we put him in place, and we had 12 months before we had to finish the endowment or the chair of the 900,000. We were at roughly 400 at this point. If we did not finish by the end of the year, we were going to have to invade the principle to pay his ongoing salary. So, there was a big push to get it done. Tim felt very strongly that it should be gotten done, and when I started getting hair-brained ideas about hawking the ranch up again, Tim goes, "No mortgages, I will donate half of a million dollars." [laughs] So we finished the chair rather quickly.

Then proceeded to...That was done. We still had to, though, in that interview process by all candidates of how it became evident that we had where we thought that endowing a chair was it, that we had to create an endowment to provide operating funds for the expenditures. You couldn't have a program if you didn't have a known source of funding at a level, and we had decided from the interview process, you minimally needed a half a million a year. So, we said, "Hey, guess what? We got to go raise enough money now to provide a half a million dollars, guaranteed, and if we can get other money on a year-to-year basis, great, but that's the next process." So again, you figure you'd finished your project, but you hadn't because it grew into the next step. Then that's when at the Club, we ran into the whole executive director turmoil and the big financial problems that the Club, which we then straightened out and put the new systems in. This is when the strategic planning was going on, and it all sort of dovetails.

DH: You referred several times now to the 1989 meeting. That was in Chicago?

SA: Yeah. That was December '88, I guess.

TL: It was December '88. It was in Chicago, the one in Chicago.

SA: Right.

DH: Is this the meeting where we had spoken earlier with the raising of the funds?

TL: For the Heads and Horns.

DH: Do you care to talk about that?

SA: Well, actually that was Towny's deal, but that was another situation that I...It kind of was sprung on us by Bob Model. The Cody Museum [Buffalo Bill Cody Museum] was expanding, was planning the expansion of the museum. So, they were trying to raise funds for this expansion and had talked Bob into, the Boone and Crockett Club had...Because we had our collection of—

TL: The national collection of Heads and Horns.

SA: A collection of Heads and Horns there already at the museum, which we had sent there several years before, but in fact the collection is decades old. They stopped at the Boone and Crockett Club, or rightfully, it was figured that we had some deep pockets and that Boone and Crockett Club should put up a quarter of a million dollars in order to build its own little—

TL: Exhibit.

SA: Exhibit. Little cabin, a little hunting cabin inside this one wing of the new—

TL: Firearms. Firearms wing, and they were part of that. So, basically is they said, "You want to hang your heads and horns here? Fork out 250,000 bucks to build the exhibit area in our new wing." And—

SA: When he [Bob] comes to the meeting, without previously talking to anybody.

TL: Well, he caught me.

SA: Yeah, but I mean this is...He just came to the meeting and nobody knew what was going on until—

TL: Well, what happened, I think he went to Spencer, I suspect. I've never tracked it down, and Spencer said, "Go talk to Lathrop."

He comes over to me, and said, I mean when he got done with it, it was as clear as a bell Bob had committed us. And he had not had authority to commit us, but he had signed a contract committing us to the \$250,000.

SA: This is actually where we first meet Larry Means, because [he's the fundraiser for the Museum expansion] we the presentation. We get the presentation; it's on the walls and everybody's going, "Yeah, this is pretty, and what's this over here?"

"Oh, this is the Boone and Crockett corner."

"Oh, well, that's interesting." Well, what this is all leading us up to was the—

TL: Steve, it was done. It was a done...I mean, this is what I was trying to tell you. We were committed without authorization. The Executive Committee had not authorized committee to do it, but clear as a bell, we were committed. Because the very lunch you're talking about, he made the presentation, Bob had been all over me, like, "How we going to get the money?" And he was mad at me at once that I hadn't done anything about getting the money. I was looking at him, talking to Steve, and the problem, you can imagine, is we're facing, 'How?' We've only got to raise a half a million dollars on a chair that if the guy hadn't given us a 100,000 or a 120,000, we wouldn't have raised a dime on in the previous 12 months. We've got all of a

sudden...how are we going to raise 250 [another 250,000]. Obviously, Bobby wants us to go to the members, so you're seeing, these guys are going to get inundated. We also had another program selling some bronzes, and he was going to contact every member. From a fundraising standpoint, I mean, I just sat there and said, "How are we ever do this?"

Bob, to his credit, had obtained four pledges of \$25,000 coming in, and during the afternoon, he and Means had obtained a \$25,000 pledge, a \$10,000 pledge, and a \$5,000 pledge—the five being Red Duke. Red was going out as president; Tim was coming in. So, at the dinner that night, we were very fortunate, that's when we met Steve Mealey, because Steve Mealey gave the keynote address that very inspirational about the Club and what it was doing. But prior to the dinner, figuring, we'll try to make a dent in this, I asked Red Duke who always had been our auctioneer and stuff, I asked him if he'd ever been to an United Jewish Appeal dinner. He said, "No," and I explained to him, that at the United Jewish Appeal there are people in the audience that are set to make pledges. It's prearranged, and they go around the room then and everybody's got to make a pledge. So, I said, "Red, I think you'll be so...You're going to announce the four people. We'll get their permission, tell them that we're trying to do something. We'll announce the names of the four people, and then we will prearrange with the three new pledges, including yourself, that they'll be so moved by this that they'll make the pledges." [laughs] I said, "You know, let's do 25, 10, 5," and I said, "but, now Red, keep it up at that level," and I said, "If you notice that the room is gone—it's just clear that we can't go anymore at that level," I said, "tap on the podium twice, and I'll pledge 1,000. I said, "I don't want to kick it down too early." Historically, with auctions with very good art and stuff, I don't think we ever did more than \$25,000.

That night in 15 minutes, we raised \$162,500. The place went berserk. [laughs] I mean, they just, nobody could believe it. It was over in 15 or 20 minutes, and they literally were walking around going, "We just do that? Yeah, we just did that." It was amazing! It also showed us that if you work this club late at night, [laughs] you had a high potential of getting some money. The other key to it is you must write the pledges down and have a witness, because a lot of people don't really remember making it sometimes. I mean, that had been extremely successful, but they were really, really excited about that. The next year, we go into...we start getting phone calls before the annual meeting, "Well, what are you guys going to do this year?" What are we going to do? And that one was in Washington, and actually what we needed is, we didn't even have a shed at the ranch that Bob Peebles, the manager, could work on equipment in the winter. He was working outdoors. I said, "We're going to kill that guy. We better get a shed." There were a couple...we needed some cattle, we needed other things, but we did a hundred...Just going out, we went hand to hand asking for pledges, I think we got 120 [thousand] that night.

Then we left them alone in San Antonio, and then we went into Denver. That year we had, it was decided...Paul Webster had come in, we had good financial systems now, and we had an identified deficit that we had to get back to zero. I mean, it was just so depressing at the Club that this hole—it was like an \$86,000 hole. Then somebody else...Oh, Rocky needed \$40,000 to

buy cows. So, I said, "Okay, here we go again," and we got it that night. We've stopped doing that now, because what we basically...We got out of deficit and it was a lot of fun, but one of the keys on always was we had to have identifiable things that we definitely would achieve. I realized that if we ever had a failure in that, the whole momentum we had would go. If you could give them a shed, the great thing is that in the next trip to the ranch, "Come on, let's go down and see this shed you guys built." Cody was great, because when they finally opened Cody, they could go and they could see something that they had done. One of the problems with the professorship conservation, it had been such a long process that they couldn't see tangible results. That's why hiring the professor, we think, has helped so much that it will make it easy to...I think the next steps are going to be easier because it's tangible. Every time Hal Salwasser stands up and speaks, these people just about [snaps fingers], well they booed him or pray for him not to give a speech. [laughs] But generally, they think he's really great because this is their professor. So again, that was emerging—that excitement from success to these people really got it going.

SA: I've got a time problem here.

DH: Okay. One last question. Steve, now that you're leaving as the president of the organization, a two-parter: How do you feel about leaving, and what's the future going to hold for the organization?

SA: Actually, very honestly, I do have mixed feelings about leaving. I have gone through various stages of being real burned out with the amount of time that this has taken, because we had some real problems with the executive directors as soon as I'd...Let's see, I fired, immediately fired, one executive director. No, I fired two. I fired two executive directors, hired another one, and then fired him.

TL: The trend line on our executive directors was 11 years, 11 months, 5 months. We weren't doing real good.

SA: Not doing very well. So, I took on the responsibility essentially of being the executive director, which a lot of that was real educational and actually, it's just kind of the way I do things. I tried to slow down and not be on the phone. I mean, Towny, literally Towny and I were talking several times a week and a couple, three times a day sometimes on stuff. He's in business, I'm in business, and you just can't make any money, I mean personally, if you're spending your time on [unintelligible]. But on the other hand, I really enjoyed, I felt that what we were doing was very important. I thought that this was an organization that had a tremendous heritage, and that had been neglected, and that there were just a very small handful of us that could really have a tremendous effect, not only on this club, but doing some things that would have a tremendous impact on conservation in America. I'd been involved with the Nature Conservancy and the American Farmland Trust and some other organizations, but they're big organizations and there are a lot of heavy hitters involved in both those organizations and I was just a small pea in the pot.

Here all of a sudden, I was thrown right in the middle of, and had an opportunity, to be involved in the organization, in its rebirth, I guess you'd say. So, I kind of had feelings of possession, that it was something I had that I couldn't let go of, and that I felt I made a commitment to donors, frankly, the Searles-Dixons. "I'll put the sweat in if you put the money in," kind of deal. So, I felt I owed some people some loyalty. But there were times that I would get burnt out just because it was so much work, and even when it was all good, I mean all progressive, it was just tremendously time consuming. Really at this point, there's real mixed feelings. I do think it's time that some other people have a shot. Over the last two, three years, several other members have done an awful lot for the organization and deserve their chance to put their stamp on what happens to this point forward. I think that the Club is in a great position. There is a good handful of folks who would be in line for the presidency for the next, assuming that they remain presidents, president for a two-year term, for the next ten years. I see that there are good individuals if they continue to maintain their interests will be fantastic, will be much better than I am. I think that...I feel real good. I feel real proud about what has happened the last five years. It was just Towny and I—it just took so much time. I'm sure Towny will have some thoughts here too, but real mixed feelings. You feel very proud, but also I'm happy that some other folks now are beginning, are going to take the reins.

DH: Towny, do you want to take a whack at that?

TL: Yeah. I guess my feelings about it are, I think we did, if we were to do something and to meet our obligations, I think we've done it. I mean, I do. I think this club is far different than what it was when it was handed over. I think that a lot of these issues that have been dealt with, thank god, they've been dealt with because I think it sets the organization up far better going forward. It's funny, Steve, the night we went to the meeting together in the limo with Spencer, and he said, "You guys owe us sweat equity to this thing." So, I felt that we've met that obligation and one that I think we both took very seriously, because he asked us and we told him that if we got to be part of it, we would do that. I think its future is great. I think that the level of activity is phenomenal. I think the number of people involved now is just great. I have somewhat, I guess you...if we picked the Club up in an adolescence stage or whatever, we probably got it in the teenage years now. So, you have a little bit of a worry that maybe, is it going to go sideways, or whatever, but the answer to that, I think that, it's not just us, but it's to the whole club. On the walls of the archives is inscribed, "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance." Hopefully we can watch, and if there is anything that seems to be going sideways—and I don't think it'll occur, but if it becomes apparent—but if we watch, I mean you can see it, then try to just be a little bit of a conscience. I guess the frightening thing about that is for guys our age to be the conscience of an organization that [laughs] we're the younger people is a little frightening. As Steve, I'm just very thrilled to have had an opportunity, if this thing is better, I think, we had parts to do that. I guess that's a great thing. I said, I think earlier, we were just merely temporarily given the opportunity to carry the torch. Well, I don't think we dropped it, and that's what to me is so—

SA: Very satisfying.

TL: Yeah.

SA: Knowing that the job is far from done, but it's just very satisfying what we were able to accomplish.

TL: Because I can't emphasize enough, I mean if you take all those things, that's compressed into a five-year period, and heightened by, I mean every step of the way, there's economic chaos inside the operation, there is staff chaos inside the operation. A lot of it, we had a lot of self-inflicted wounds, but to not have it have blown up, to have gone through...I guess I would say that's our greatest contribution is to have gotten all of this done, and we answered honestly before, without a whole bunch of people being alienated and leaving. I mean, this thing is significantly different, and they didn't get up and walk out. And they're, I think, excited about what they've got. So, I guess that's the great thing. tell you something else. The quality of these members—these people are very successful people, very bright people, wonderful people, and to see that...it's pretty awesome to have assisted them, or to, I hate to use the phrase, directed them. That to me is the most awesome thing, is to get them to have done this without getting turned off it at a very difficult process.

DH: Thanks, gentlemen.

TL: Thank you.

DH: I won't take any more of your time.

SA: I tell you what. Go ahead, and—

[End of Interview]