

Before continuing, Collected Roots would like you to know that certain names have been replaced with *** in order to protect the privacy of those mentioned. Also, please keep in mind that the actual journals are printed in landscape format as seen on our website.**

**Thank you for your understanding,
Steve and Megan**

Where did you pick up your handyman skills?

I was just a little fart when the cabin got built. Most of my skills came from when I was going to college over to the mobile home factory in the summers called Haven Homes. They built trailers, the double wides or the singles at a little town called Avis at Jersey Shore where Lynn's from, I worked there in the summertime. And then I flunked when I was in Shippensburg Pennsylvania. The first college I went to I flunked out. So then I went to work for this Capital Coach. It was called Capital Coach Haven Homes. I went to work full time. I was taking business. I didn't really flunk out. My grades weren't bad, but they weren't the best. But I had a broken wrist.

I broke my wrist the last football game of the year stiff arming a guy. I got my hand caught under his helmet. I popped my wrist back and it broke. A bone cracked in my wrist and I went to the doctor. The doctor said there's nothing wrong with it and gave me a shot of cortisone. I wrestled all year with it. It bothered me all year long. Oh it hurt like hell! The wrestling coach would give me a bunch of crap about it, called me a wimp. He said "*****!!!" I said, "Coach it hurts!"

But anyways, I wrestled all year, went to Shippensburg and wrestling season started. We were practicing and the coach said, "What the hell is a matter with you?" I said, "I got hurt playing football my senior year and it still hurts." He said, "Well you better go see your doctor." They sent me to the doctor down there and the guy said right then, "Broken bone. There's a big calcium buildup in there now and we can either re-break it or put a couple ball bearings and a piece of wire in there." I said, "Aaaughhh!" And so I knew I couldn't wrestle and I said the hell with it. I came back to Williamsport and there was a specialist there who worked on this sort of thing. So I came up and went to see him. He basically told me the same thing. He could use ball bearings and a piece of wire or put it in a cast probably for six to seven months. I said, "I'll take a cast!"

So I quit school and took a job at this factory and was in a cast for seven months. It finally healed but I can't, I can't bend it back or do push-ups. I still have to do push-ups on my fingertips. It doesn't bend back all the way. All through college I had to do push-ups on my fingertips. But anyways, I flunked out of Shippensburg and went to work at this factory and remained full-time. I started out just as regular maintenance guy and set up the jigs. They welded iron frames to I-beams like and they did it on this jig. The guys would attach the outriggers in order to build the floor and this and that. I stuck the wood in after they welded the stuff together, so that was my first job.

At lunchtime I started welding. I said, "Hey teach me how to do that." So the boss came by one day and saw me welding. I thought I was going to be in trouble. He said, "Hey, doing pretty good. That's not a bad bead!" A couple weeks later he came back and said, "How would you like to do that full time?" I said, "Hell ya!" It was a

dollar more an hour. I was only making a couple bucks an hour before. So I learned how to weld there. And then we laid floors and the walls and stuff. And I guess that is in effect where I picked up most of my skills, in that factory.

I always liked to tinker with stuff like automobiles. I always liked to tinker with automobiles. I could fix minor stuff, never could tear an engine apart or anything. I could do sparkplugs and breaks and all that kind of stuff. And points back when they had points. I tinkered with that a lot. My dad, he didn't fool much with carpentry work or mechanical work. I mean, he did some mechanical stuff. Of course out on the camp he did all the stuff out there that had to be done, fixing doors or windows. Or painting and chinking logs and this and that. He didn't do a lot of carpentry work really, other than around the camp. Same with the car. He didn't do much. If something happened to the car, he took it to the garage. I mainly worked on old Chevys and Pontiacs. My first car was a 61 Chevy, I think. And I could change the plugs, the points, distributor caps, certainly did a lot of that and the breaks.

For my interview at the construction job, I had my cast on. I told them it was going to be off here before too long. I had worked for them before part time so they knew how I worked. I had that doggone cast. I went swimming and put plastic bags on and wrapped it all up and went swimming.

What position did you play in football?

Position played was quarterback. The wrist got broken during a busted play. I went back to pass and whatever and the blocking broke down or something and I took off running. Well, we had a couple option plays where I could carry the ball. It might have been an option play. I don't know. But, I was running the ball and I went to stiff arm, which I did not run the ball that often. I couldn't run anyways. I was slow as molasses in January and had braces on both knees and, no just the right knee I guess that I had the brace on, but yeah! My sophomore year I played defense. Some of my junior year I was the quarterback. And oh boy, probably the couple of the good stories was one of the option plays we had.

It was a double fake, fake to the halfback going through. And then the fullback comes around and then I finally end up stuffing the ball in his gut. We ran it again. I don't remember where the high school was, but we ran the play and faked everybody out. And the second guy we handed the ball to ran down and scored a touchdown. But when the first guy hit the line the officials thought he had the ball and blew the play dead and the second guy was standing in the damn end zone! They wouldn't change it. They said, "Hey the whistle blew, sorry about that." They would not count it. I argued with the officials a little bit. So we got back in the huddle and I said, "Hey guys, were going to run the same damn play and run it down their throat." We ran the same damn play and we scored the next play. They didn't blow that one dead!

That play worked a lot. We had a pretty good team, pretty good team. That play was called the Belly Option. I think. I can't remember what it was called anymore. I think twice I faked. First to the first halfback going through and then there was an option. I could give it to the first guy. I could give it to the second guy or I could keep it myself

if I wanted to and run it. That might've been how I busted my wrist. I might've kept one time. I should've given! I should've stuck it in the fullbacks gut!

One of the funniest things that ever happened is I always wanted to play defense because in JV ball I played defense and quarterback. But I played defense because I liked to hit people. And once I became the quarterback the coach said that I am not to play defense anymore, forget about it! I was pretty decent defense. I was a linebacker. But I wasn't very big, but I wasn't bad. I got intercepted or something at one of the games. The guy was coming back down the sidelines with the interception and of course, I was the last hope to stop him. And I said, "Oh boy! Here comes my opportunity to knock someone on their ass!" Oh, I hit the kid. We hit

helmets and it about knocked me out. I was dizzy as hell for quite a while and I said, "Ewe! Maybe I don't want to play defense anymore." I stopped him, oh yeah. I knocked him down, but oohff! I went down too. I saw stars!

I wore number 11 and 17 two different jersey my senior year. The day I broke my wrist we were playing Hughesville High School. The score was either tied or we were down by a point or two. I don't remember which and there were four seconds left in the ball game or five seconds. I don't know. And we stopped the clock. I talked to the coach. I told him we were going to run this pass play and then ***** was the kid's name. I will never forget it. He was supposed to go down and do a button hook or something into the end zone. And then I threw a touchdown pass the last play of the game and beat that school by six or seven points. I don't know what the final score was but that was my last game and my last pass. We were a good team. We were undefeated one year, my junior year. My senior year we lost a couple games. I got nominated for the big 33 which is the best high school players in the state and I got nominated. And if you get elected you can play in like a high school classic game or something. I got nominated but never made it in. You finally get voted in by the rest of the coaches. But I got nominated. I had a pretty good record. A lot of yardage, a lot of touchdown passes, which have been broken since then. That was back in 62 when I graduated. I was in the record books. Still in the record books back there, but the....I enjoyed it, had a lot of fun.

When did you start wrestling?

I wrestled for three years. Well, I wrestled for more than three years. Hell, I've wrestled since the time I was five, six years old on a pony league and all that stuff right into high school. I never had to wrestle a girl. There weren't any gals at that time wrestling. I wrestled a few on the side! But there weren't any gals at that time. And my high school coach, he probably would've forfeited instead of sending anybody in there to wrestle the girl. He was that kind of a guy.

I know you have some good wrestling stories?

Some of the guys, one of my good buddies was the state champ in wrestling. I didn't make it to states. I lost in the regional finals. He was the state champion, but he wasn't that coordinated. He was strong as hell. He wasn't that coordinated as far as a wrestler. I don't know that I really had any one particular best move. But I think I won more by points probably points. I had a lot of leverage I was kind of tall and thin and had lots of takedowns. I was pretty good at takedowns. The arm drag was probably one of my best takedowns. I used to use the arm drag a lot. I didn't have any particular move that I could say got me out of trouble.

I wrestled with my legs a lot. I got a lot of people with my legs just by putting in cross body rides or figure four to the stomach. And the guy would go to get up on all fours and I would just give them one of these and pressure would hit his gut. I wrestled a kid from Williamsport who looked like a big beast. I mean he had muscles coming out of his ears. He was built like a brick shit house. I said, "Ewe! This ain't good. This ain't going to be a good." But I threw the legs in on him and he crawled off the mat. I hurt him bad. And about a week later I talked to somebody who said he ended up in the hospital with cracked ribs! I said, "You got to be kidding me?" Muscle wise he was the biggest kid I ever wrestled, muscle wise. He scared the shit out of me. He didn't know much. He really didn't know much, but he was strong as hell. I mean, if he would've got a hold of me, he probably would've killed me! But I was too quick for him. I got the legs in on him and I punished him. I punished him. I used those legs a lot!

Now, you mentioned gymnastics?

Yep, we had our gymnastics team too. Well, it was a club really. We didn't have a team. It was a club. I played basketball one year after about four or five games, then I quit and went back to wrestling. I just enjoyed sports and played baseball, but we didn't have a high school baseball team, and wrestled. I was the lead scorer on the basketball team, a JV team before I switched back to wrestling. I was going to give up wrestling because in my sophomore year I couldn't make the team. So I was going to give it up. But getting back to gymnastics... We just, the gym coach went to Lock Haven University, which was a big gymnastics school and PE as a matter of fact. That's where my wife graduated from was Lock Haven University. Well, Lock Haven State Teachers College. And so he got all the equipment and the high bars, parallel bars, the trampoline, the Swedish boxes. And I just enjoyed doing that sort of thing. Swung on the horizontal bar, worked on the parallel bar.

We put on a show every year just for the family and people would come see it. We didn't compete with anybody else because we didn't have teams. It was just a club, but I enjoyed almost any sport. I could do the iron cross, the giant swings on the horizontal bar. I could not do the handstands or what have you. But I could do the iron cross for, not real long, probably 10 seconds, 30 seconds I don't know. I could do all the flips on the trampoline and on the parallel bars. I did everything there was. Football and wrestling were probably my two top sports. I was voted the outstanding athlete of the year by my senior class, the graduating class. I was given the outstanding athletic award in high school. We had a lot of good athletes, but I could do just about all of it.

At what point did Lynn make her appearance?

I had just come back from college I think. Or maybe it was after I flunked out of college, after I left Shippensburg. I guess it was right after I left Shippensburg and a couple of my buddies that I ran around with, we were always running around going here and there. And there was a carnival going on in Jersey Shore, Lynn's hometown. They said, "Let's go to the shore, to the carnival." I said, "All right." We were just out looking to pick up girls is what we were doing, looking for women. And so we stopped at the carnival and I ran into her and one of her girlfriends. We got to shooting the bull and talking and this and that and one thing led to another. And before I knew it we were dating. And then I had gone back to school. I was working at Capital Coach back then I think when I met her. I was working at that mobile home place and then I went back to college.

I got accepted at University of Maryland. And so I went back to college at Maryland and my junior year I guess it was, yeah that was my junior year. She had one semester to go to finish college at Loch Haven State Teachers College. She was a PE teacher. She graduated ahead of me because I was out of school for a couple years. I was out of school for three years before I finally went back to school after she graduated. She got a job teaching and I was still going to college. I had one more semester to go and she taught while I finished college. Then I went to work for the Park Commission.

Did you say that you picked your wife up at a carnival?

Yep! Met her at the carnival. Picked her up at a carnival! We were just walking around I guess. I don't remember if we were at a ride or maybe a concession stand. Probably just walking around the carnival... saw these couple girls and started talking to them or trying to pick them up. And then come to find out, she was a hell of a lot younger than me. I mean, I was 19 years old then or 20. And she was only 17-16. She skipped two years of high school. She was that smart. They moved her up grades! Dumb ass me... I don't know how I got hooked up with her. She was, her IQ is off-the-wall! So anyways, she was a lot younger and I started, well I just met her there. And then I guess, obviously I liked what I saw because I called her up for a date!

And I can still hear her mom. Well, she tells a story that when her mom found out that Lynn met me at the carnival and that I was coming for the first date, that's when they said if he stops and blows the horn you are not leaving this house! Which I would not do. So I stopped, I got out, walked up to the house, knocked on the door and it was raining. It was a dark night and it was raining and I had a black coat on; trench coat like. Of course my eyebrows were white as hell. It was in the summer and they were always white because they were bleached out back then and great big bushy white eyebrows. And my mother-in-law to this day still talks about that. "I opened the door and saw this guy in this dark coat. And there's a big white bushy eyebrow!" Yep. They said, "If he stops and blows the horn you're not leaving this house!" Because I was older than her... they knew I was three or four years older than her. They were a little skeptic about me

dating her. I don't remember what we did for our first date, but she would remember. I probably took her out to a movie or maybe we went to another carnival. I don't know!

So, what did Lynn see in you?

It must've been just that I was a kid from out of town. A nice guy at the carnival. And yeah, we did not know one another from Adam. She used to go to all the wrestling matches. She was a few years behind me in high school. She did not go to my high school. As a matter of fact, the two high schools, the only time we met in sports was like at regionals or for tournaments. We did not compete because their high school was bigger than mine. Mine was a smaller high school. So she saw me wrestle, but she did not realize it until I talked about it. After we had talked about it, she had seen me wrestle but did not realize it at that time. I guess she just liked what she saw and we kind of hit it off.

And she was going to Lock Haven University. And my old girlfriend, my high school sweetheart, was also going to Lock Haven. And they went to the same dorm and it only had one phone too. So, I would call up and ask to talk to Lynn and Rosalie would answer the phone or I'd call up to talk to Rosalie and then Lynn would answer the phone! Because I was still kind of dating both of them at the same time off and on! I was dating both of them and hadn't made my decision as to which one. They both knew it. Oh yeah, they both knew it! So that was a little hectic for them living in the same dorm.

What was the secret that got you into the student council?

Well, I guess probably the reason, the biggest reason I got on the student council... or I guess you had to be voted in. Well, yeah you had to run for office or whatever it was. Because I was a big football player and a wrestler and popular on campus... that's probably the only reason I got the vote. I mean, I wasn't a bad ass kid. I treated everybody the same and I was good to people. I didn't...I thought I was vice president, but Lynn said I was president. So maybe I was one year. Either my junior or senior year I was president of high school... had to conduct the meetings and such. I was vice president of my senior class. That's what it was. So I guess I was president of the student council my senior year. I enjoyed the experience. I didn't mind getting up in front of crowds and speaking. I mean, I wasn't probably the best at it. But because I was around a lot of people and knew every doggone kid in school I knew all the kids and treated them all nice. A lot of the guys were jocks and kind of turned their nose up to the kids that weren't real popular. I treated everybody the same. A lot of the jocks were snobs. They thought they could do anything, but not me. I did not put myself up on a pedestal. I did my thing, but I didn't act like I was a hotshot.

Did sports interfere with you being an outdoorsman?

Oh yeah. I was torn between it every now and then. As a matter of fact I can still see in the locker room. It was wrestling season and the wrestling coach...it was who

were we wrestling. I forget who we were wrestling. It was a good school. And my buddy, my high school buddy, him and I cut school to go hunting. And of course, when you cut school you can't practice. And we told, well it was during a farm show, Harrisburg farm show I think. So, it had to be January or February. Maybe it wasn't. Maybe it wasn't a farm show, but we cut to do something that was outdoor related. Hunting season might have been over then. Because I could see the signs... the coach put these up signs all over the locker room the next day! "***** and ***** go to the farm show!" But we actually cut to go fishing or hunting or... Oh he was madder than a firecracker! The rest of the team knew what we did, but that was the only time I actually cut any practice, football or wrestling.

Now, we always had the first day of deer season off in PA so there was no school. So there was no activities. And the first day of fishing season we did not have off, but I took it off probably and went fishing. Well, it comes in on Saturday. I would not have taken it off. It did interfere but I stuck with the sports and I hunted after school or whatever. But every now and then my dad... I would say, "Dad, I'm going to be sick." And he would sign a slip for me so I can take a day off and go hunting. Especially if he was going somewhere so he could take me, but it interfered. But I stuck in there. I made the commitment. So I stuck with it. But I did, I did take a day off now and then to go hunting or fishing.

Do you archery hunt or did you ever get into it?

I do very little. I did a little bit way back when; more re-curves, some longbow. I never killed anything with it. I messed around a little bit with the compound here in Maryland. I do a little bow hunting. Basically, I'd just scout and see what's out there. I've shot at a couple and missed them. I don't get up in the trees. Well, I used to get up in the trees. But I've never killed a deer with a bow. And, like I said, I don't go out that much. Maybe once or twice a year I might go out with my bow and...but I'm not really a diehard bow hunter. But I love to be in the woods. That's a nice time to be in the woods. My dad never bow hunted so I never, I never was exposed to it until later on in life.

Same way with turkey hunting... he never turkey hunted back then. There wasn't any spring turkey hunt, only fall. Now there is a spring turkey hunt and they didn't, they didn't actually...when they saw turkeys they shot at them during turkey season, but he wasn't into turkey hunting. I just got up on my own more or less. When we went up to camp I would get up on my own in the morning and go to see if I could find the gobblers. Dad and the other two guys were the only two left in the camp. They would say, "We'll see you and you better get going." And I would go. Then when I would get back we would go fishing! When I got back they usually had breakfast pretty much ready to go, because I would only hunt usually until eight or nine o'clock because I knew they wanted to go fishing and I did too! Unless I killed a bird, which I killed a few while they were still living.

When did you start tying your first flies?

When I was a kid, my dad knew a guy up there that did some fly tying. So, he said something to him. Dad said the guy gave me a little vice and some feathers and some thread and stuff to really get started. That's when I really got started. I was maybe 14-15 years old. I started tying these flies and continued on. But, I really got into it big time when I came here to Maryland. That's when I really got into it when I met these other guys. The Cow Dung guys! Those guys also tied flies and then we got together and we really got into it. But I have tied flies since I was 14-15 years old. I met these guys through the park; working through the park. And well, Milt is the guy that has the barn. That is the one we call Cow Dung now. Built a loafing shed like and then made a clubhouse out of it.

***** is back from PA where I am from... about an hour's drive, 50 or 60 miles away from where I am from. I met him at the University of Maryland. Him and I became buddies and started fishing together. We started fishing on the Eastern Shore and fished all the ponds for the large mouth bass and pickerel and of course trout. And ***** I met through the Park. He called me up...he was a school teacher and he called me up wanting to get a conservation club started and bring kids out to the park and have them help with whatever kind of projects I had. At that time, I had just gone over to Little Bennett and nothing had...well, there was nothing there. It was raw forest.

So we were getting ready to put trails in and build the campgrounds. And that is when I got the idea of Little Bennett Creek, of building my own trout stream and doing some stream improvements to try to improve the stream enough to let it hold trout. And so I had these kids come and they helped with all that kinds of stuff. So I said yeah, and that is how I met him. He was from Pittsburgh and he trout fishes. And that's why he had the conservation club because he was interested in outdoor stuff too. And then a friend of his, *****, is also from Pennsylvania. He taught at the same school and he taught biology and was an insect man. And, of course, I wanted to do insect studies on the stream and keep kind of an inventory on what kind of insects were there. So the kids, they kept an inventory of all the insects and I kept records of it. I had all that information on file if anybody needed it. And the school did all the work. And we got the trout program going and there still are trout in it as far as I know.

***** was a wrestler. He wrestled for Chief Logan, which is right outside of Lewistown Pennsylvania. He was a wrestler and I was wrestler. And he was behind me, a year behind me. I met him at the University of Maryland on the wrestling team. I wrestled the first year that I was down there and then I finally quit. I had to get a job because I did not have a scholarship. The coach helped me get in because they were looking for a 138 pounder. That is the weight class I was in at that time. I went to work for some newspaper in Prince George's County and I worked there stuffing the papers together to get them ready for the other guys to take them out and ship them. I worked there and then I started working for the Rec. department doing teen clubs. Umpiring during baseball games and so on... football games, all in PG County. I got tied up with the recreation department there.

How did your career start with the Parks?

My major was PE. I was going to be a coach. I was going to be a coach and teach physical education. I met *****. He was taking outdoor education in the recreation department. PE and Rec. were in the same building. We had a class together and I got to talking to him about parks. He said, "Oh hell yes." It turns out at that time his dad was a park naturalist. Well, we got to talking about the parks and the Outdoor Option. So I got to talking to one of the teachers and they told me that there was an Outdoor Option program and what it basically does is it gets you ready, well, to be a park naturalist or a park manager or something like that. So I said, "Hmmm. That sounds interesting." "Well, as a matter of fact, ***** is in this class if you want to talk to him. His dad runs Park and Planning. He is the head naturalist." That was ***** and ended up being the Director of Parks. ***** was the director when I finally graduated. Well, shortly after I graduated. He was actually the chief of natural resources. That is what they called it then and that ended up being the naturalist series.

So anyways, I talked to him and he said, "As a park naturalist, we basically just teach outdoor education." I said, "You mean you teach people about the birds and the bees and the flowers and the trees?" I said "Hell, that's down my alley! I mean, hell, that's something I would like to do!" So then I switched. I switched out of PE into recreation and took the Outdoor Option. I got a lot of science background and management. And then I did an internship at Park and planning at Brookside Nature Center. I did a six-month intern at Brookside Nature Center. After I was done with the internship, they told me that if I was looking for a job to let them know. And ah, just before I graduated, there was a job coming open for a park manager/park naturalist. It was kind of a combination of the two, so I applied. The job had not been approved yet through the County Council or the Commission, so they hired me as a maintenance employee. I started out as a maintenance employee. But what I was actually doing was working at the Wheaton Ice Rink. I was the assistant manager at the Wheaton Ice Rink on an hourly salary. After about two months or three months, it was February of 69; I graduated in February of 69 from Maryland and went to work for the ice rinks.

On July first is when the new budget came in. July 1st is when the park maintenance manager came in for Dickerson. It was going to be Dickerson Regional Park up there on the Potomac River where Cherrington is right now. It is now called the Dickerson Conservation Park also known as "Warm Water." They were going to have a boat building and boat rentals on the river, trails, a nature center and a house with an apartment built into it. And that was the position I was hired for. Well, the position came on July 1st. But, of course, Dickerson never happened. Of course Little Bennett happened and then Black Hill. But that is how I got involved with the Parks Department. I got my start was with the Wheaton Ice Rink. And then the next year I was the full manager of the ice rinks. I was hired as the naturalist/manager, but the park was never built. But since I had the position they just made me the manager of the ice rink because I could get the pay of a manager there. I was working at the ice rink under a naturalist/park manager title. That's the way it was written. I think I still have the PA-2 upstairs. For the first two years, or a year and a half in the winter, I worked the ice rink. In the summer, I worked at Rock Creek and ran the boat shop at Lake Needwood. And

then, at that time, the Dickerson job ended up being switched to Little Bennett-Black Hill-Damascus. I ended up being the manager of all of that. Plus, all of the Stream Valley Parks, of course. And, of course, there was nothing out there then. There was nothing built.

I actually started with the parks before *****. I graduated ahead of *****. He was one year behind me. I actually had 33 years of full-time employment and one year of sick leave. I had 34 years of credited service in the Commission. I did not work the last one to get 35. I said, "The hell with it!" I said, "The hell with sticking out the extra year to get the 70 percent retirement." One year shy of 35 years got me 68 percent retirement.

You made a trout stream?

I saw the stream in the middle of the park. And I thought, "Hell!" But at that time there was nothing out there. I mean, all there was was forests and trees and streams and a hell of a bunch of trash. There was nothing there. There were some old houses with people living in them. And people were just dumping trash. I mean, refrigerators and vehicles, beer cans and just trash everywhere. For the first year, that's about all we did was hauled trash out of the park or bury it. That was before Little Seneca Lake. Well, see Little Bennett was supposed to get a lake and a golf course which it has now. The lake was going to flood the whole bottom from Hyattstown all the way up to Burnt Hill Road. The dam was going to be right above Hyattstown. Just upstream from Hyattstown. They moved the location of the lake because of my trout stream!

Well, I did not want the lake. I wasn't in favor of the lake at all. I didn't want bass. I wanted trout. I mean I was a trout fisherman! I love to trout fish and I saw the stream and I didn't bother reading. But I knew people who had done stream rebuilding work here and there. And so we were doing a lot of reforestation and a lot of planting and a lot of wildlife stuff. But because I was interested in trout fishing, I said to ***** and them; ***** was my boss at that time. He was the head of the naturalists. I said, "Hey, I'm going to work on the stream." They said, "Go ahead." And I started with the kids and then heavy equipment. *****, he ran the bulldozers and stuff. I got him up there to bury the trash and what have you. And while I had them up there doing that, I had rocks brought in from the quarry. They were building the new courthouse in Rockville. So they had all kinds of rock that day. I had them bring it up and dump it in the park. And then I took these rocks and put them along the stream to stop the erosion. We put in water bars, bank stabilization, and we did all of this shit for four or five years. I built a trout stream or improved the stream and made it back into a trout stream.

As for the dam, we didn't have any pressure from WSSC to build the dam. This was not going to be a watershed dam. It was strictly going to be a recreational park. Just like the one at Oglebay, the Maintenance Management School. That is where Little Bennett came about. *****, and ***** used to teach at Oglebay. And when they went up there and saw a golf course and the skiing and the creek, they copied Oglebay. And that is what they wanted to do at Little Bennett. They wanted the lodge and the reservoir and a golf course. They were the director and executive director of Park and Planning at that time. So they are the ones that came up with the scheme that this was what they wanted to build up there.

Well, then I came along and started doing maintenance and put the campgrounds in. That was part of it. I laid the camp ground out. I just walked through the woods and said this is what we are going to do. And the boss came up and said, "Yeah looks good to me. Go ahead and do it." So, we got the bulldozer out there and knocked down trees and made the campground. We started building the trails and in the meantime I was still screwing around in the creek and doing all kinds of work on Little Bennett. And then we got the state involved because I had to go through the state with the water. Even though it went through the park the water is regulated by the state. So, I got a hold of the state fishery people because I wanted information from them. I knew what I wanted to do and I had read a lot. So, I wanted to run it by them. Well, I called the guys down, and they said, "Shit, we don't know anything about stream improvement. You know more than we do!"

*****, he is retired now. *****, he is still there. ***** was there. He is still there and was at the tail end of it when I was screwing with the vibrint boxes and building Reds, and getting the fish. A Red is where the trout spawn; where they clear out their area and lay their eggs. Just like a bass does. That's called a Red for trout fishing. I think the name came from salmon spawning beds. So, we made artificial ones and took these vibrint boxes to a guy by the name of *****. We took a box that's vinyl and has little holes in it. He put trout eggs in this box, then put it in the Red. We went out there in the stream and cleared out the gravel, put the box down in there and covered it up with the gravel. The eggs were already fertilized. We got fertilized eggs from a hatchery up in Pennsylvania. And then they hatched and were born right in the stream and eventually they started reproducing on their own. Really all this was was just a big experiment. But it worked! We had nice brown trout in that stream. There still are, they are still active up in there.

I spent a lot of time just working on Little Bennett Creek with the kids and stuff. And then that is when they got ready to build the lake and all the Trout Unlimited people and the conservationists said, "There's trout in that water. You can't be building a reservoir." That was one of the things that kind of bopped that in the ass. And then ***** came along and he was on my side. ***** didn't want the lake in there either. So he got on the bandwagon about all these trout and all of the environmental stuff that they were going to screw up and flood over. So that killed the lake, they never built it!

Then Black Hill came along, which was fine. Although, I wasn't real crazy about Black Hill either. But that turned out to be a hell of a nice lake. And that was emergency water, so there was nothing we could do about that. Well, we could have because that was a lot of park land, but the park agreed to go ahead and do it. But that turned out nice. I like Black Hill. The construction of Little Seneca Lake did not bother my trout at all.

I was at Black Hill right until they started to build the visitor center. Then I got sent back to Rock Creek. I built Black Hill and Little Bennett both, but Damascus was already developed with ball fields and tennis courts. So, there really wasn't much to do there. But I had a ball at Little Bennett. I mean, I was doing wildlife stuff, stream work, campgrounds, and trails that ***** conservation kids helped me with.

I said something the other day to ***** while I was coming back from turkey hunting. I used to have a Christmas breakfast for my staff every Christmas and have it there at the Park. I said, "Shit, I wouldn't be able to have the Christmas breakfast anymore with all these neighbors looking over the fence at us." We started at six o'clock

with the whiskey and the beer. I mean, we were shit faced by 11 o'clock. And I cooked up sausage, bacon, home fries... we had a hell of a breakfast! I had people from the whole commission come. I bet we had a hundred people come up to my breakfast there every year.

Why is it that the legend of ** still lives within the Park System?***

I would say because I treated people like they were people. I respected people, they respected me and I didn't get in anybody's face or cause problems. I tried to do my job. I just met a lot of people and treated them right. And they respected me and they treated me right. A lot of them went on to bigger and better things after they left me and I always did whatever I could do for them to help their career. Just as long as they did their job and kept their nose clean I backed them. When they got off track I told them about it. And then I said, "Hey, that's it. Either you clean your act up or you're not getting any more support from me." And so, I think people just respected me because I treated them right. I don't know of anybody in the park system that I probably couldn't go up and ask for something and they would help me and they would do it. Or they would do it themselves. That is probably the main reason, because I treated people right. I helped anybody I could.

I think my people skills were exceptional. I was able to work with almost anybody and that is what got me through the commission I think.

So then, where did you learn these people skills?

I don't know where I learned the skills. My dad, he was very personable. I don't know anybody that really did not like my dad. I probably got most of them from him. He was easy-going and a happy-go-lucky guy. So, I would say I got them from my dad. I'm just a good listener, a good learner and I've watched a lot of people over the years. If I look back on my career and my high school and all the adventures I've done, I treated people right and I respected them. And it all came back to me. They did the same for me. And I would learn a lot from watching my dad and other people do things. And I learned that that's not the way you should do it, you should do it this way or that way. More and more I guess it was just natural. It just came to me.

What might your family not know about you?

They may not know that I had my brother locked up, *****. He is still living in New York. He was kind of the black sheep of the family. When I was working at Capital Coach, I had a checking account. And of course, we were both still living at home. Now he's doing okay, now days. He finally met a good woman who straightened his ass out! But anyway, I got a phone call that I had checks bouncing. The state police came to my work to get me. They said, "*****1, I think we have a problem. We think your brother is getting access to your checks and writing checks." And he took a bunch

of my checks and I don't know, 500 dollars worth of checks he wrote out or something. So, while I was talking to the police I said, "Yes, that's my brother's handwriting." He was forging my name on these checks. They had two or three checks. They said, "Well what do you want us to do?" And I said, "Well, I want my damn money back." They said, "The only way that you can get your money back is to have him arrested." So, I had him arrested, my brother. And the insurance or whatever got my money. Well, he ended up having to pay it back. The lawyers, the police or whatever, but I said, "Hey god damn it! I worked for that money. Lock his ass up!" So, they locked his ass up.

He spent the night in jail. Maybe it was two nights. I think it taught him a lesson. He got better after that. And like I said, he finally well, his third wife, his third wife was a good woman and got him on the right track. He now has three great kids and finally has his act together. But, he was always getting into trouble when he was in high school. We're good now. We don't see one another very much. I go to New York to see him. He comes into PA or I go up. We get along, but I would say that that left a bad taste in my mouth and it's probably still there. But I don't hold it against him anymore. I love his wife I love his kids. He has great kids. They're all doing really well. Maybe we have talked about it right afterwards... a few chit chats or something. But I don't think we've mentioned it in the last 20 years or so. I bet his kids and his wife don't know. My kids may not. I think I probably told them, but I may not have. I just assumed that they would know, but Lynn knows it. I can't really think of anything else that I've done that they don't know about or haven't heard me talk about.

What do you remember about your Grandparents?

I don't know anything about my grandfather. The only thing I know about my grandfather was that he was a drunk, an alcoholic. When he died, he was 40 some years old. On my mom's side, I knew Grandpa ***** because I lived with him for a while. Well we did, the whole family did. He was still living when I was a kid so I got to know Grandpa ***** a little bit. He was living in the stone quarry. He ran the lime plant at the stone quarry. And the house there was an enormous house. There was room for two or three families. So, they lived there for a while shortly after my mom and dad were first married. We took care of grandpa because grandpa wasn't in too good of shape, but they had a big place there at the stone quarry.

We used to ice skate down in the stone quarry. There was always water in the quarry because they were so damn deep down in there. There was always water laying in there. But there were rocks. There were always limestone rocks sticking up. So matter of fact, I still have the scar on this one knee where I was ice-skating and I tripped and ran a pointed rock right in. I had a hell of a hole in my knee. I ran one of those rocks right in my knee. I had to go to the doctor. I mean, my brother and the kids we were skating with hauled my ass down to the house and they took me to the doctor. Well, no they didn't. I think they just wrapped it. Mom and dad just wrapped it up. They just took me to the house and they wrapped it up. I did not get stitches. That's probably why I don't run fast. That was the start of it. I was just a kid when it happened!

If there were snow in the quarry, we would have to shovel the snow off. And then we had to be careful because there were a few rocks here and there. We would always bring tires or wood or something and build us a big old fire next to the side. Because the water was only a foot or two deep, that is why the rocks were sticking out. It wasn't real deep. The quarry would open up again the next day. I mean, they were 24-7. We only went up there on the weekends to ice skate. But, they were still working there. If it was an older section or where they were they weren't still digging, then they probably didn't go back in there. They would be working on a different section because there are a lot of big holes up there where they were taking rock out of the side of the mountain. When we were skating, the holes were probably 100 or 150 feet down in the ground. I mean, it was a big area.

One time a couple kids were climbing on the doggone rocks and one of my brothers had to go up and save his ass or he would have fallen. They got him out of there with ropes or something. I was just a little fart. My two oldest brothers saved the kid from falling down in there. They were just kids up there screwing around out on limestone... out on the edge there. Luckily my brothers were home and got the kid out of there.

And the one pedaled bicycle?

I remember when I used to ride my bicycle down the stone piles. Because when I was eight or nine years old, the bike that I had only had one pedal. I couldn't afford another pedal. So, I would get up on top of the rock pile and I would ride the bike down the rock pile!