

7 Bonner History Roundtable: Remembering Local 3038

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Glenn Max Smith

Dennis Sain

Jim Hill

Charlie Long

Fred Guenzler

This program has been edited for clarity.

(intro music playing with credits)

[00:00:58] Glenn Max Smith: Before we get started on our topic today, Local 3038, but for most of us who lived out here, we have a real soft spot for the Hotel Margaret. So whenever a new story comes up about Margaret [we] kind of like it to make this available to everyone. So, what we've included in the past was Donna Johnson, she did an excellent description of how her and her family lived there and what they experienced while living there.

Also, Nina Seaman used to be one of the Petroff girls over here. Her and her sister worked there. She wrote a letter describing this, and I think Rick Swanson read that letter in our meeting. It was a beautiful letter. It was like you were right there with her as she described all this stuff.

It was great. So with that we've got another one to add to our collection, and Dennis Sain got a letter from the McEwen family. They also lived there.

Dennis Sain: Now this is a reply to a Christmas card we sent him. And his reply was, "I thank you so much for the greeting card from the Bonner Milltown History Center.

"Mr. Demmons' photo of the Margaret Hotel in winter evoked memories of the months my mother and I spent on the second floor, while the Anaconda headquarters lumber camp was being moved from Greenough to Woodward. In the fall of 1934, the company laid railroad tracks across our front yard at Greenough and we vacated to Bonner. The MacKenzie's house and ours each had been built on three sections in anticipation of the move. The sections were separated, loaded on the flat cars, and moved up to Woodworth and reassembled. We moved back into them in February, 1935. More snow than I had ever seen. While our house was in transit, we lived in the Margaret Hotel in rooms over the front entrance.

"Mary and Henry Koch ran the hotel for the company. Henry was the chef. Mary managed everything else. They spoke with German accents. They were exceedingly kind to me then and forever after. Henry's food was really good, especially the apple dumplings, and was ready three times a day. One morning I poured vinegar on my pancakes, thinking it was syrup.

"Henry didn't complain and made another batch of pancakes for me. For Christmas 1934, Mary and Henry set up a tall, traditional German Christmas tree in a small room off the main dining room. They attached candles to the branches instead of electric lights. Naturally viewing time had to be limited. Each candle could have set off a major conflagration in a very dry building. We hotel residents assembled at the appointed hour to witness a breathtaking sight of their Tannenbaum followed quickly by Henry dousing the candle flames before they could torch a fire.

The hotel was a boarding house for eight or so single men who worked in the mill. During meals, they sat around a large table and ate family style while Mary patrolled the dining room. My mother and I occupied a separate table listening to the limited conversation at the men's table.

"One evening, Mr. Thibodeau, usually reserved, had been tested too far by Me'me Bellefluer. Names are not guaranteed to be accurate. When Mr. B asked for everything for a serving dish to be passed to him, Mr. T, Mr. B would calmly serve himself while T held the serving dish. Mr. T proceeded loudly to instruct Mr. B that in the future Mr. B were to take the dish from Mr. T and not leave Mr. T holding it.

[00:05:01] "Grant Higgins and Zeph Space each lived in a corner room on the third floor. They ran the Boy Scout troop in evenings and there was usually a group of boys engaged in Scout crafts and projects in the room.

"That's where I learned to tie a hangman's noose. When you hang a man, a knot is supposed to break his neck, not strangle him. So the knot had to be big.

"Zeph Space spent countless hours with one of the scouts helping him break the habit of swearing between every other word. Grant devoted years of teaching generations of scouts to swim and ski.

"We children are supposed to come home when we heard the mill's five o'clock whistle. On a very cold day playing in Bobby Barta's house. I didn't hear the whistle. My mother left the hotel to scour the neighborhood looking for me. I came back to the hotel while she was still out, so she displayed mixed emotions when she returned to our rooms and found me safe and sound. But she stayed out too long without leg coverings and severe suffered severe frostbite.

"Even by 1934, Margaret Hotel was an antique. The rooms were well heated with radiators. They must have been piped from steam from the mill. We turned off the steam when we went to bed, and then the morning we turned the steam on. They started pounding, banging, racket penetrating the whole building. Gradually the steam pushed the cold water from the radiator and the noise died away. No one complained about the loss of sleep. They were all up and working at the mill already. The hotel was wired for electricity, but the wall outlets were screw sockets, gaping open when not in use. I received my first electrical shock by sticking my finger into an outlet. My ninth birthday was celebrated at the Margaret Hotel on December 22nd, 1934.

"Mary and Henry were clearly disturbed by what was going on in their homeland, but I didn't understand what was troubling them. A few years later, it became Europe that was going up in flames.

"The best to you and a great success to the center." Dick M McEwen.

Glenn Max Smith: All right, we can add another story to our collection. Anybody else have anything on that, that you might want to slip in while we got a chance? Okay, well then I'll get on with the program again. I want to bid everybody welcome. Our meeting today will be for Local 3038 of the Western Council of Industrial Workers Union.

Is that name still? Is that still the way it's pronounced? I got this off an old, old record, but anyway, it's Local 3038 now. When I talk about Local 3038 I need to make sure that I introduce Dennis and Charlie Long and Jim Hill. These guys have put countless hours into making this union what it was.

And for me, I can think of nothing but good to say about it. With their help, they took us through some difficult times, but most of 'em, if you were willing to work it was a good place to work. You were treated fair. No shenanigans were pulled on you. I can remember one incident, Anton Iverson, I believe was our union president. He had a little growl-in with one of our planer supervisors who was always on the outer edge, always trying to pull some shennigan, throw his weight around. Tony had the fingers built like shovel handles, and he came up to this supervisor and he started poking him right here. (indicates middle of chest)

"I told you," he says, "you cannot do this and you keep on doing it" and he kept stabbing him and boy, O'Donnell's chest was getting pretty red, and he backed him up to where he was sitting on a garbage can and Tony was still raging at him. He settled that issue right there. We didn't have to negotiate anything on that. I don't imagine he wanted to be a victim of Tony's big finger anymore.

But anyway, before, actually it was 10 years before I come into the mill and became a member and a worker here, I went to a union picnic up at Marco Flats. Now Marco Flats, it's just a short distance up the valley here. There is a little picnic ground called Marco Flats there now, but that's not the one. This Marco Flats was down behind the Blackfoot Tavern. There used to be a bridge there. It was the first of four red bridges that used to cross the river to get you up the Blackfoot. Since then, this bridge has fallen in and there's a footbridge takes its place.

[00:10:17]Okay, you cross that footbridge and the next thing you'll come to is the old Milwaukee crossing. Right there was a big gate. And I don't know if there's any guys here that could remember, it was a Boy Scout camp. And the troop up there that that was donated to was Troop Five. Has anybody here been a part of that or can remember being a member of Troop Five? Jim? (indicates affirmative) I thought you were.

Okay, back in those days, I was looking forward to this party because, bear in mind out here at Bonner, there wasn't much going on. No TVs. Most of our recreation is what we dreamed up ourselves. But now here's this rumor about this big picnic and, of course, with a bunch of kids, you know what wasn't fact, we made up as fact. So up there was gonna be, and this rang my bell, there was going to be all an unlimited supply of Community Creamery ice cream that had the little Dixie Cups with the wooden spoon, all that stuff you wanted. And it was packed in a big... it looked like a huge sleeping bag, like a duffle bag, but it was packed dry ice. So even as the day wore on, you got your Dixie Cup out of there and it was still firm very hard.

So I don't know how many trips I made in, out of that truck. One time I noticed, as I was making my ice cream run, that some of the members were drinking this Highlander beer which was also in that truck, and I'm thinking, "Damn, that looks pretty good. The more of the stuff these guys drink, the funnier they get." So I

thought, well, I'm gonna, I'm gonna get me a can of that. It was steel and there was a box of openers there, so I got me a can, jumped out of that truck, went up in the bushes and popped that thing... well, good Lord, it went off like the Old Faithful.

But what was left was pretty good. So, I got back into that again. We had a fellow named Bob Lurch. I don't know if you guys remember Bob. He was big, big, powerful guy. He'd seen what we were up to and he says, "If I catch you in here again, I'm gonna throw you out." I should have listened to him because I went up in there and got my ice cream, slipped the Highlander in my pocket, and this vice grabbed me by the back of the neck and by my belt. And I was exited out of that truck. I think I run halfway to the river before I stopped running. And needless to say, the rest of the day I stayed out of that. If I want ice cream I sent somebody else in there. Also, there was soda pop. We were supposed to drink that, but you how it goes.

So 10 years later I came down here and we had a security man out here named Mr. Karkanen, Mr. Yum Karkanen. And I think it was every generation of kid who lived out here, it was part of their criteria to stir it up with him a little bit. Make life interesting. So, anyway, Mr. Karkanen come up to me and it surprised me. He says, "Well, you're 18 years old now." And he says, "there's a job available for you down there. All you gotta do is go down and apply for the job." So I went down there and right off the bat, during the orientation, I was advised I had to join Local 3038, and I was looking forward to that because I had a lot of good friends in the union. So this for me was no problem. Where the problem did begin was they stuck me to work on the green chain, 12-foot station, pulling on the night shift, and Bob Clubb was my shift supervisor. So if Yum got even with me for all those shenanigans through the years, he did, he did that. 'Cuz boy, I tell you, I really tried to get off that green chain. That was... you worked on that, there was no two ways about it. Eventually, gotta wind this down now, I worked for the mill over here for 45 years and during that time, and I'm proud to say this, I never was denied a chance for advancement.

[00:15:04]I had all the work I could handle. Boy, down on the green chain I had that plus, but anytime overtime came available, they drew you fairly. If you qualified, you got your overtime. Okay. Today, after it finally all winds down, I have some excellent retirement benefits. Without those benefits, my wife and I would've never been able to travel Europe. We did that twice. Our recent project was to restore a 1969 Mustang to mint condition. That was our first new car. We restored that little Mustang and we do a lot of traveling around now, revisiting... it's hard to find a good drive in restaurant anymore, but we go and search for those things. We get in our little car. We have a lot of fun with that. And if ever there's a good restaurant out there, we'll get all spiffed up like they did in the early sixties there, and we'll go visit a restaurant. So having said all this, I need to introduce Jim Hill, Charlie Long, and Dennis Sain, and we'll let these guys explain what it was like for them to keep this union running as good as it did. So that's what I have to say on it.

Jim Hill: Well, Jim Willis was an old friend and I guess we're cousins. He talked to me a while back and said that they wanted to come up and talk to the organization about Local 3038. And I have a lot of paraphernalia and a lot of interesting things because I, of course, worked for the union for 21 and a half years myself as first as the business rep for 3038, the old Intermountain Local 2685 and 2812, which was the White Pine Local.

And so anyway, I went back and dug out some of the paraphernalia I had and also made a few notes. And if it's all right with you all, I'll elaborate a little bit on my memory and some of my notes. I didn't want to forget some of the things. But anyway, I found a picture here that I could pass around.

It shows that they had the 25th year anniversary of the charter. Some of the charter members that helped form the union. There was 37 present at that particular reunion or banquet. One of them, who happened to be my father, was a charter member. My uncle Eino, who was Jim Willis's, step dad. And there are a lot of others. Of course Russell Winters is there. Max has talked about him. He was the president of the Local. Rudy Trickel, my other uncle. Arnie Hill. But anyway Burton Nimocks, who everybody knew and passed away not too many years ago. Olef Hallgren,, Carl Hedland, Ed Bergland, Andrew Doucette, Zephire Labbe, Al Thibodeau. Arthur Lehti or Buck Lehti, everybody knew him as, drove truck for Pat Thibodeau. But that's some of the charter members of the union.

But anyway, I dug out some of my material that I had. And this local union this operation course had been here for a long, long time. And the Anaconda mining company owned this operation. And basically they ran it. And one of the things that they did was they, of course, they manufactured lumber and planed that, and whatnot. But their primary thing was they were lagging and timbers for the mines in Butte.

And then when you're talking about lagging, I mean, a lot of people don't understand what you're talking about as far as lagging, but it was just a piece of lumber that might be three inches in thickness. And they cut it to length and whatnot, and they'd ship it over to Butte when they were still doing a lot of the underground mining, and then they had the timbers and they'd shore up the mines with that.

[00:20:02]Well, the information I dug out is that finally after a long period of time wages of course weren't that great. My information from Charlie maybe had some more stuff that I might have missed or whatever. It showed that the Local union was chartered here in 1942.

And I say my father, two of my uncle, were charter members, in fact. And you always wonder why do you form and organize a union? Well, obviously some of the things with all the years that I worked in union were that, your concern is that you try to better your wages, your benefits and things like that. So you can do the right thing for your family. But I always recall one reason that I think my dad helped form the union. He told me one time, it was before the union came in, and one of the reasons he was pretty adamant for helping form the union. There was one time that they were advocating that the grizzly football team was in dire need of funding. And anybody that knew my father, knew that he wasn't much for sports. He did hunt and fish, but as far as football and basketball or things like that, he wasn't much for that. But anyway they, the management at the mill, decided that maybe what they would do is run a Saturday and donate the wages from the workers. They would donate it to the Grizzly football team. Well, anybody that knew my father, knew he was pretty outspoken. He more or less told them he didn't give a darn if they ever had a football team. Well, as a result of that, the foreman sent him home for the rest of the week. So he figured, well if we had a union that those kind of things couldn't happen.

Well anyway, the union was chartered. It started as a part of the Carpenters and Joiners of America. It was originally called, I believe, the Lumber and Sawmill Workers. Later on, I don't know exactly when, they changed the name. Because of the change in whatever they were doing to Lumber and Industrial Workers.

As I talked about, the old White Pine Local, the 2812, if I recall correctly. Their charter was issued in like 1937 or so.

Unidentified Speaker: Pretty close to '37 or '39.

Jim Hill: Yeah, but it was the oldest local in Missoula and the old Intermountain Local the 2685, I think, was right after the Second World War about 1946, I believe. So those dates I'm just doing from recall. I've been retired since 1994. I recall that the Anaconda Mining Company was called the Lumber Division. And somewhere along the line they ended up splitting it off and decided that they would rename it the Anaconda Forest Products. Then they had Timberlands that was broke off and called Anaconda Timberlands.

So through the years I have some information myself, but this is stuff that happened at the plant. In 1972 US Plywood bought the operation from Anaconda and they started building the plywood plant following that. I think they opened it in 1973. But then later on US Plywood changed their name to Champion International.

And then of course, in 1993, Stimson bought out the operation from Champion and took over in the fall of 1993. As far as some of the things that really happened for the union and why things resolved or came about... some of this is from memory. But the first thing I can recall is in 1946 they went on strike against the Anaconda Company for wages and they were on strike for approximately six months. And anyway, after being on strike for six months, they ended up going back to work for about the same wage that the company had offered them before the strike.

[00:25:32]So when I started in 1955, and I know that a lot of others started a little, maybe earlier than that. Charlie [Long] was about that time. I was making a dollar 78 cents an hour. So that was some of the wages that were involved in there. [In] 1959 I was also working at the plant at that time. We went on strike in September and we were on strike until November of that year. The company had made us an offer of 5 cents. And anyway they were starting at that time starting to do some, what they called pattern bargaining with the Western Council, as Max was talking about.

The Western Council was an organization that our union belonged to, and they were starting to do that pattern bargaining, and they negotiated with a lot of companies like Weyerhaeuser, Boise Cascade and companies like that. And anyway, the pattern that year was 5 cents, or I believe, five and a half cents, and with 2 cents it went for brackets. In other words, there'd be a total of seven and a half cents. The 2 cents would be if they had, I don't remember if it was the size of the crew, but they would figure out how much money they had and then maybe certain classifications would get bracket adjustments. They might get a nickel or 10 cents over what...

But anyway, in that 1959 strike, after being on strike for two months, like I say, they had offered us 5 cents, the general wage across the board. We ended up with five and a half cents. So the most of us that were on strike for two months, we ended up with a half a cent raise.

But anyway, it was the idea that we needed that other half cent.

One of the things that also happened at the plant, prior to Anaconda selling out, was in about 1962, the planer and the green end. They built the new building and fit both the planer and the green in and put the overhead cranes in and had storage inside and all that.

So, 1972, of course, Anaconda sold out to US Plywood. And then one of the other things that I had down here was in 1986. The Champion Timberlands, and that affected Denny [Sain] because they had part of the bargaining unit, the Timberlands, and they shut that down. Champion no longer had part of the union as far as the Timberlands.

Also, I believe it was in 1986, they shut the sawmill down and remodeled it. Of course, it was a big mill. They used to cut dimension and shop, which when we talk about shop, it was the big pine logs and they cut that into five, five quarter and six quarter. And they used that for molding. White Pine did a lot of that of course. But anyway, when they remodeled that, they took out all but one of the head rigs, and ended up putting in what they call the double-end dogger. And I don't know if it's still there or not. It might be, but if it's probably not gonna be staying there. But anyway, it was basically a stud mill and you just run a log through there and it come out mostly two-by-fours and one-by-fours.

[00:29:46] But then in 1986, it was also one of those things that really was a bad thing with pattern bargaining. We had rollbacks. The big corporations, all the ones who were working together, decided that they were gonna take away wages and benefits from the union. Well, as it turned out that's what happened. I think common labor at that time was \$11 and something an hour. They rolled the common labor back to \$9 an hour. So there was people who took over \$2 cut in wages. They lost holidays; vacation pays were changed and stuff. Well, it ended up that after quite a bit of negotiations, that the people did in fact accept that. I mean, it was a bitter thing to have happen, and not one of the things that I look back very fondly on. Companies like Champion or whoever was involved in that, because they were still making money, but they took it over the backs of the employees that were doing all the work.

Well then in 1988 we had another strike. And they came back after all those rollbacks and the company said at these negotiations... I think Denny was probably on the committee at that time... They said, well, we're glad to be able to make you an offer, you know, because things are better. But they weren't as good as we wanted. So we ended up on strike from, I believe the union was on strike from June of 1988 until September, and we finally settled. I think we got a \$1,200 bonus in the first year and we recovered some of the holidays and vacation and things like that.

So that's some of the things as far as the history in the plant itself. Now I know that Max [Glenn Smith] was talking about the benefits and things. One of the things that I know when I first started in 1955, that one of the reasons I went... had worked down here at the service station for Eino Weimer for I think like a dollar and a half an hour. But then of course, a dollar and a half to a dollar 78 cents, that sounded like quite a bit of money. But anyway we also had health and welfare benefits [and] pension. Anaconda had a pension program and I shake my head to think about it now. But I recall that it was, I think that if you worked for 35 years, you would get \$75 a month pension.

But that's not what Max has been talking about. The thing is after Champion took over and we were able to negotiate with Champion, the benefit went up to, I don't remember, I'm just doing it from recall, it was like \$20 or \$25 for each year of credited service. And I think even under the old Anaconda, you had to have at least 20 years or something before you even qualified for a pension. But anyway, under the Champion pension program I think you only ended up having to have five years of credited service. But I recall after a lot of the negotiations, I think that the final pensions from Champion were like \$35 for each year of accredited service. So I think most people ended up with pretty decent pension. Fred [last name unknown], you probably, are getting the pension, I'm sure from Champion.

Fred ?: Yeah. But I was in supervisory at that time and I made out better than the rest of you. (laughter)

Jim Hill: But anyway, that's a history of my overview a little bit. I tried to write some of this down. There's probably some things I'm sure I forgot. I think of myself as I've been a lifetime member of the community. I've lived in Miltown for a long, long time, and my wife and I have been down in East Missoula for now, it's hard to believe, for 31 years. And last week or so, I had my 75th birthday, which is hard to believe. I'm kind of like some of the old people that make the comment, "Well, if I had known I was gonna live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself."

[00:35:00] But anyway, I've got some literature here that I don't know if you guys might be interested in. My dad ended up being a 50-year member of the local union before he passed away. I'm a 50 year member of the local myself. I still am a member. The only thing is that when they closed the office, they transferred me to a local over in Oregon. And I've got some of my old dues books and they're interesting about how much... I dunno

if anybody would be interested or not, but some of what, for example: 1955 dues were \$3 and 75 cents a month, initiation was \$25. And I recall... here's one in 1975, I was paying \$11 a month then. And in the late eighties, 1987, it was \$27.85, but I think just before they closed the operation, I think they were up around \$50 a month.

Glenn Max Smith: So yeah, we had it held right out the check.

Jim Hill: So, but I say I have here a thing that I feel very proud of. My father's a 50 year member and they gave him a gold card and I have one too. (shows card) All right. I'll let somebody else talk. There's some of the things that, that happened when I was served as the business rep and also as the Western Council area rep. So without talking too much about all

Charlie Long: I started Bonner in June the 2nd of '53. I went up to Dwight Hughes. He was hiring at that time, and I used to talk to Dwight and ask him if I could get a job at the mill. And he says, "Well, have you got a pretty good back?"

At that time, you didn't really get a physical. I said, "Yeah, pretty good."

"Your heart pretty good?" "Yeah, I'm in pretty good shape."

"Well", he said, "okay." He told me to begin June 2nd, so I started there the 2nd of June in '53.

And then in 1964, I'd been going to union meetings and they asked if I'd be a conductor, which was taking the passwords and seating people during the big meetings and stuff, so they have a seat. So I did, and I took that for three years. And then Tony Iverson, at that time he was president, and he said, "Would you like to take the President's job for the union?"

I said, "Well," I said, "I don't care to have it." I said, "How come you're gonna quit?"

He said, "Well, they're giving me a job as foreman for maintenance."

And I didn't want that. But then I talked to Gordon Dearborn. He was treasurer and he was ready to give up his job. So I took the treasurer's job in '67 and I ran for that. And I'll give you a few my duties here. Earl Kolpa at that time was financial secretary, and he had to collect dues from everyone. This is before they had [to] take it outta your check. They used to have 'em take it outta the checks I think about '74 when Champion came in. But he collected dues from everybody and then he handed the money over to me. And then I took it to the bank and made a deposit in the evening, the money. And then my other duties were to pay the bills and to pay the per capita tax, and union officers on the plant committee. And then I was also... at that time they asked me if I'd be a notary. So I took the notary job for six years and then the Democrat committee got a hold of me about that time, asked if I'd be a committee man for this area. I said, I didn't know what the job consisted [of].

They said, "Well, you go around and register voters, and you take people [to] the polls and stuff." So I took that for a few years as committee man in this area. And even in town, they asked me to come in town and take people to the polls and help register people and things like that. And coming back to the treasurer's job, I worked with Earl right up to '74.

[00:40:14] Well, by 1971 the job got a little more complicated. Billy Brothers, he was the head of the district council. He was a business agent wasn't he, Jim? I think.

Jim Hill: Yeah. The Executive Secretary of the District Council.

Charlie Long: Yeah. He got ahold... he had a meeting one evening. He says you're gonna have to start taking social security outta the plant committee checks and state and federal tax and industrial accident. And made the job a little more complicated. I didn't know if I wanted, but I took a crack at it and anyhow it worked out okay. I got an accountant in town to help me out on this and every year you had to make out a W2 form for the plant committee and take the taxes out of their checks when I pay 'em for their lost time and stuff.

And it was pretty interesting. Then I also had to make out what they call Landrum-Griffin Report. It was a yearly report. The money taken in and the money you paid out that had to go to the federal government, you had to break it all down and send it in. I think it went to District Council and then they sent into to the government. And on this social security and the other taxes I had to make a monthly deposit at the bank to the Federal Reserve System. And it was pretty interesting. I done this till about '82 and I was the treasurer for 15 years and I guess that pretty well covers it. But that was mainly my functions.

Glenn Max Smith: Okay. Good job, Charlie. Dennis.

Dennis Sain: Well, I became a shop steward in... I think it was winter or spring. I think it was spring of '64. Conrad Richley was the other shop steward... and he's not your shop steward... you're also on the plant committee. And I helped him collect dues until we got the clause in the contract for the dues to be deducted

from your check. That was a great godsend... trying to catch these guys in the woods and get 'em to pay their dues each month. I mean...because we were going ten other different directions. There was some crews down at Lolo and some in Gold Creek and some in Lincoln and some over by Drummond. It was...to try and catch these guys, to get their dues. So when we negotiated and got the dues withheld from the check, that became a lot easier. I stayed a shop steward until...oh... Conrad Richley, he got bitten by a tick up in Cramer Creek and so he retired. He got that tick fever and he never could come back to work very well. So, George Hart took over the shop steward with me and we were there until Anaconda sold out.

And the union was disbanded... when they were going back to work. Well, they contacted me and Jim Hill contacted me. He says, we want you to be a shop steward again and help get, sign up and organize. Well, US Plywood really had no objection to the union organization going on. The union was actually a benefit to US Plywood-Champion. Throughout the country union brand on the lumber meant a big difference in a lot of jobs. So, there were no real qualms about getting guys signed up. And so we got the union organized and Norbert Fifield was the interim president till we could have an election. And so he told me, "You're the vice president until we have an election." So that lasted about two months, thank God. And I stayed on the shop steward probably about another four or five years, and then some other guys in the woods wanted to take over. So I let them take over and they lasted a couple of years.

[00:44:50] Jimmy Trickel took over and he wanted me to come work with him. So Jimmy Trickel... we were good shop stewards. (laughter) Trickel... if there was something ...he could invent something. And then we got Ken Pullman to help us as a shop steward. Then you wear out after a while, and so I let a bunch of other guys take over the shop steward. But I still... I knew the contract, so I mean... the foreman... I had one foreman one time...we got in an argument. I almost got him to hit me in front of the crew. I mean, I was pushing his limits. Because I knew if he hit me it was a union problem. Then we're dealing with the Labor Relations Board, not the company. If I got him to hit me... but he wouldn't hit me and we eventually settled it.

Years later, they made him instead of a crew boss, they made him another boss over the roads. And we're sitting on the logs one day eating lunch up there and one of the other guys we're eating lunch with... and that foreman left. And he says, "I've been around here a long time. You were shop steward. The two of you were knuckle to knuckle so many times. It's amazing how much you two have changed. You'd think you're the best of friends anymore." And I says, "He's mellowed and I mellowed." (laughs)

So that's basically what I had to do with the union. The other little part of it was when we had the wildcat strike. I'm going to work at Twin Creeks that morning, and I come by the South Gate and there's everybody standing out there. And I thought, "What the heck?"

And Jim Hill flagged me down and says, "We're on strike. You're not going to work today."

He explained it was over the accident in the mill. And so I run up to camp. And Trickel, Ike Pullman, and I... we were the shop stewards... so we put up our picket line at the gate at camp. But we let everybody cross the picket line because it was payday and they had to go into camp to get their check. (laughter) Well, that about what I have.

Glenn Max Smith: Okay. Anybody in the audience might want to add to this?

Frank Betts: Well, I just have a couple comments. One is about Bob Lurch. He's my brother-in-law, and he's not doing really well. He's had... maybe prostate cancer. He's had a brain aneurysm and he's had a lot of other medical problems, so he is not really doing well.

They live in Esacade (? Unclear), Oregon. And he has some breathing problems as well. And ...the other comment was I think Charlie Long probably been one of the best treasurers that we ever had. (applause)

Glenn Max Smith: Okay... I guess you're up next (unclear)

Fred Guenzler: Well, I started working for the company in 1948 and we were with a different union... it was IWA at that time. Us and Harper Brothers was in that union. And in 1953, I think we had wanted to strike and we couldn't get Harper Brothers to stay with us so we had to abandon that.

And we joined Local 3038. And then I was in the union for 32 years before the company decided they needed some more supervisors, so I went into supervisory, but they transferred me to the Missoula side. They were the non-union and everything...And I worked there until they shut everything down and everything else.

Then, of course, I bought the equipment from the company and went with my own as the contractor. And I did that, let's see, it must have been 20...24-25 years I'd contracted on my own. And then everything..., I was on the logging end of things and everything shut down. There was no work no more. So I decided to retire at 80 years old. I'm 81 now, so I just decided that was enough. But the company did treat me okay after I started contracting

and everything else. When I bought the equipment from them they wouldn't go out and go to work [the company switched to contract labor in the woods]. They offered me a job if I would and everything and I did.

And then... in August of 1961, they had the Gold Creek burn...which probably a lot of you remember and... everything. .

Glenn Max Smith: I remember.

[00:49:53] **Fred Guenzler:** And me and Henry Prost was on bulldozers. And we went to the fire and we got in there a long ways and the wind changed and brought it over us. And then we had... and I had to out-run it with the bulldozer, and I got on an open ridge. And I started making new trail because I had a guy out in front of me flagging trail for me to where he wanted to put the fire trails. And I was...so, I waited, I made trail till he got back to us. Well the fire overtook us. So we had to crawl under the machine and lay in the dirt for an hour and 20 minutes while the fire burned over the top of us. And the only reason the machine didn't burn and we survived because it was new. It was only three months old. It wasn't dirty. It wasn't full of sticks and stuff. And it melted a few things on it. But I left it run while I was...We...I just...I never... It was at the boiling point. I let it run and then we just crawled under there and as the fire was going through the canopy and stuff. And we just waited it out and everything was... when the fire burned over us and it went and it cooled down.

We got out from under there and sitting out in the fresh air for a little bit... as much as you could. And then, we decided we wasn't gonna get outta there because we was at least a half a mile inside the burn. So we got on the machine... and there was nothing you could hardly touch on it... everything was red hot almost. And we drove it out of there. And then had to watch out for the stumps so we didn't get hung up because if we'd got hung up on a stump we'd have burned up. But we made it out of there. And then I spent three days and three nights in the hospital. After that and the first night I was out [was] wishing I was back because it really cooked my lungs. But I'm okay now. Doing fine.

Glenn Max Smith: Incredible. That's incredible. (applause)

Dennis Sain: Well, an anecdote to that part: When they were trapped in the fire Henry Prost's bulldozer burned up.

Fred Guenzler: Yeah. He run astraddle of a stump.

Dennis Sain: Yeah. And Al Dawson, who was...he liked to think he was the meanest S.O.B. in the woods. When he found out...when Henry got out of the fire and he said Fred and Len are trapped. For as mean as Dawson was, he was in tears thinking he'd lost two men in the fire. I mean...for a mean old guy like Dawson to come to tears... that was really something down at camp.

several speakers: (overtalking) So you want to introduce Fred and now

Dennis Sain: This is Fred Guenzler he..., he worked in the woods...well from 1948 and...

Fred Guenzler: I put on 63 years out there, Dennis, Working.

Dennis Sain: He worked up at Camp Eight.

Fred Guenzler: I worked at all the camps except Camp Seven. That's the only one I didn't work at.

Dennis Sain: And he went ...He knew the McEwens, the MacKenzies...

Fred Guenzler: All of them. Yeah. George Neff.

Yeah. They were looking for an airplane to come and fly over and try to find us in the fire. 'Cause they knew we was gone. But we saved ourselves and we was able to drive it out. Took us to the hospital.

Glenn Max Smith: That's just incredible. I was on that fire and I. Good Lord. I can't imagine anybody being stuck in that thing.

several speakers: Yep. Yeah. Well, we got out of there too. Yeah, I was there too.

Dennis Sain: Yeah. In those days, the mill would...in the 1960 fire and the 1961, they shut the mill down.

Glenn Smith: They sure did and away we went.

Dennis Sain: And anybody who was able loaded on the trucks and they hauled them up either to the first Gold Creek fire or Elk Creek. And then the next year was the second Gold Creek fire.

Frank Betts: On that down here at the mill. This was before I started worked there, they had a place outside the one pump house, and they filled water bags for the firefighters. They were filled every... the water was changed

out of them once a week and refilled with fresh water, so that if there was a fire anywhere the water was ready to go.

Glenn Max Smith: Okay. Do we have any more to add to it? I don't know...

[00:54:45] **Kim Briggeman:** I have a question. How much did the union change when Anaconda...when they switched over from Anaconda to Champion, was there any major changes?

Jim Hill: No, not a lot. I don't think, Kim.

Dennis Sain: At that time, A lot of the Anaconda management stayed on at Bonner. They were just acquired. So you still basically had the same rapport with the same people you were dealing with...as a few years went by, then Anaconda replaced, or I mean, Champion replaced some of these guys. And it wasn't quite as nice a feeling going down to negotiating meetings. But the early days when you negotiated with the Anaconda people, their word was their bond.

Jim Hill: That was one of the things I didn't really elaborate on. I don't know if anybody's really interested in...but as far as my involvement...a lot of what I talked about earlier was the history of the local, but as far as myself, personally, I say I started there working in 1955. I'd gone to high school at Missoula County High School and graduated in 1953. Actually I was only 17 years old, not old enough to even work in the mill. So the first year I worked at [the] service station.

The second year I went to work at the mill in 1955, and I was only 19 years old or 18. So then I stayed there, but then I worked in the mill from 1955, and I say... and what I talked about, the things that had happened there until 1972 and was rehired by US Plywood. And I'd worked as an overhead crane operator after they put that operation in.

And I worked on night shift. Jerry Gow was the operator on night shift. And we shut down for vacation one year and Lefty Pleasant was the foreman. And it just happened that Jerry decided to go do something else after vacation. Right after vacation, Lefty asked me, "Well, you want to go?"

I've been driving forklift for quite a while in the yard working for Lefty, and so I went on night shift. But then in 1972 when they sold the plant, I was rehired by Champion and worked on the green chain for a while and went back on the overhead crane in the planer department.

But then 1973, I was elected. First I ran for office as vice president in the local and was elected vice president. And Warren Cork was the business rep and for some reason they were very unhappy with him for a long time. I guess they found out... and I was at the union meeting and I don't know exactly how it came about, but anyway, after our local had raised a lot of Cain about why didn't they get somebody to run for business rep.

Nobody was gonna run against Warren Cork. And I don't know, it might have been Jim Willis, it might have been Charlie or somebody. One of my...

unknown speaker: It was Vern Marvin.

Jim Hill: Vern Marvin. But anyway, I said, well, I'll run. So...they nominated me and I ended up running for business rep for the three Locals: 3038, 2685, 2812. And lo and behold, I got elected. So that was about the time that ... and they didn't give me the job right away because they had a provision in the contract. You did have a new contract, but it said you had to be an employee for one year. Well, nobody was employed for one year because US Plywood had just taken over the operations.

Anyway, as Denny talked about ...as far as the plywood plant here, I was a brand new business rep. Had no experience whatsoever in negotiations or anything like that. Plywood plant opened up and they, the company, had agreed to recognize on what they call the card check. So we had to go over there and talk to the people, sign them up.

And that's what we ended up doing. And they did recognize the union, of course, Champion... or US Plywood on a card check and in the plywood plant. And we got that operation in too. So...but anyway Billy Brothers was the...when I was first in the union... was the Executive Secretary of the District Council which at that time was called the Inland Empire District Council.

[00:59:55] When I first started, Bob Weller was head of the Montana District Council and they consolidated with unions in Washington. So then we ended up calling it the Inland Empire. And then, of course, as Max was alluding to, we were affiliated with the Western Council of Industrial Workers. And that's all the unions in the western part of the United States. And when I got involved in that Jim Bledsoe was the executive secretary of that and their headquarters was in Portland, Oregon. And after serving - oh, I don't know - from 1973 to... I think I got a paper here...

Anyway, when Bill Brothers, I think, retired in 1988, Mike Draper was the head of the Western Council at that time... appointed me to serve as a business representative or area representative for the Inland Empire. And I had local unions Libby and Thompson Falls. I had a local union down at St. Anthony, Idaho, over in northern Idaho, Washington. I had a lam beam plant over at Columbus, Montana. A railroad down in Idaho actually was part of that. And so it was an interesting job. And I served in that capacity for the business rep and area rep for 21 and a half years. And then in 1993 when they ...Champion sold out to Stimson Lumber, they kept me around until the end of April or so of 1994, until I helped negotiate the first new contract. Crown Pacific had also bought an operation up at Thompson Falls. And I helped negotiate that contract. And they ended up retiring me because they downsized everything.

And at that time Brian Earhart took over as business rep for the local union. And then he served in that capacity for quite a few years. Then he decided to quit. He retired early. Mike Woodworth, who used to be, and I'm sure some of you people know him, worked at as a millwright. He ended up as the business rep until they closed, and I guess they closed the office here about two years ago.

And so 3038 is nonexistent anymore. So it was a sad day. And I told Max that when they closed the office about two years ago, I tried to get the charter. It would've been a pretty nice memento to have, but for some reason they didn't get back to me and I wasn't able to get that. But I do have a few things here...I don't know if you might be interested. Some of 'em. I don't want to get rid of, but I, we can make, get copies or whatever.

Glenn Max Smith: We'd like to get copies. Anything we can get.

Mac Palmer: Was the eight hour day already in effect all the time you guys are talking about or did that come in during this time?

Jim Hill: It was in effect when I first started.

Mac Palmer: My father-in-law was a business agent for the Longshore Union. Long before the eight hour day.

Glenn Max Smith: Right at the end ...the last time we remodeled the mill and turned it into a stud mill, we agreed for the lumber side, lumber department, plywood. We decided to have four 10-hour shifts. And right off the get go, that was, that extra couple of hours was, that seemed to drag on, but once you got used to it and had that extra day off that was a pretty good deal.

Jim Hill: That was a negotiated thing. So...

Mac Palmer: (unclear)

Jim Hill: Like I say, Denny and I, we spent a lot of hours together in negotiations, grievances, and one of the things that was very interesting is as far as Champion... when they first come in, they were a pretty good company, I think, to deal with. But I don't know... they didn't realize we had a lot of new people in the union at that time, but we had a provision in the working agreement, the first agreement between Champion and the 3038 that had binding arbitration.

[1:05:00] And I'll tell you... It turned into a headache for both of us, I think. Because we had arbitrations and, I think, during the period of time that I was a local business rep and the area rep, we had over a hundred arbitrations. One time we got into a dispute...and it's an ironic thing there was we got in a dispute over a wage rate. One of the guys in the planer department, whether he should get the increase in wages for the day that he worked on that. Well, anyway, it amounted to 48 cents. And we were determined he was gonna get that raise in wages. That grievance went all the way to arbitration. We finally got there and we were... and the arbitrator says, "Well, I've heard a lot of cases, but I never heard of one for 48 cents."

Anyway, we ended up ...we settled the case and I don't remember who was the superintendent at the planer at that time, but he wanted to give us 50 cents and we said, "Nope. Can't do it. Gotta cut a check." (laughter)

Dennis Sain: So we had the one arbitration from the woods. The company was offering the sawyer...having the sawyers fallin' trees, when they're fallin' the timber to go ahead and fall the snags. And they would pay them three quarter scale. I mean...the sawyer a fell tree. He would scale his own tree. How many board feet were in the tree?

Well, they were gonna pay the sawyers three quarter scale instead of full scale on the snags. And one of the shop stewards was George Hart. He thought that was a good deal and went to the union meeting, we're gonna vote on that. And a couple of sawyers come in and said that just isn't going to cut it. So we went back and told the company it has to be a hundred percent scale. And that went to arbitration. I think we arbitrated that for about a year. And I went back and I told all the sawyers, I said, "This looks like it's gonna go to arbitration. I want you guys to keep track of all the snags they're having you fall, because if we win, they owe you money."

It went to arbitration and a couple of sawyers come in and testified. And the arbitrator was Carlton Snow. And he had a pretty fair reputation. And at end of the arbitration, he says, "From the information I gathered from the witnesses and from the company side and the union side," he says, "what I see involved in this, they have proved their case. That technically they should probably be paid 110% scale, but the union only asked for a hundred percent. So I'm awarding a hundred percent scale". Well, the sawyers got a pretty good check after that. They were happy with the union for a couple of days anyway. (laughter)

unknown speaker: Yeah, the snags are actually more dangerous than the green chipper anyway. So like you say, you should get 110%.

Dennis Sain: Right. I mean, you don't know what a snag going to when you're making that final cut whether it's gonna snap off the stump. A green tree gives you a warning.

Gary Matson: Just a question. When you guys are doing all of your work in the union do you do that as volunteers or is that all volunteer time or does it replace some of the other work you would do as a regular employee?

Jim Hill: No, they got compensated for any lost wages. They never got any extra. But they got compensated for their time lost.

Dennis Sain: Yeah. Like up in the wood there. A lot of times, we weren't compensated because we're dealing with guys up there. I mean, that's basically part of the function. But if we had to come to Bonner to negotiate, you lose a day's wage, you were compensated for your lost wages.

Jim Hill: That's what made Charlie's job so interesting. (laughter)

[01:09:33] **Judy Matson:** I was wondering too, I know because of the union involvement, the safety programs were initiated and it sounds like you did a lot with wages. Were there any other major kinds of negotiations besides those two that you can recall that made a difference...

Jim Hill: Well, one of the things as a result of what we call the wildcat strike, we ended up for a good number of years there, we had nurses around the clock at the plant. And I mean, that was part of [what] came out of that. The thing is that when Denny was talking about that, I was in Portland, Oregon. We were over there for a meeting. Then when we found out about it we had to fly home and then they were on strike, of course. There was a lot of interesting times. That just happened to be one of them. So, I say in 21 and a half years, I started out, like Kim, without any hair, but it's got a lot grayer over the years. (laughter)

[01:10:28] **Dennis Sain:** We had the one incident, Jimmy Trickel... everybody that knew Jimmy, I mean there, there was an act to follow. He was a shop steward. And one of the mechanics in the Cat shop had a grievance with the foreman. And Jimmy went in to talk to the foreman that morning. And him and the foreman didn't get along. The foreman, this is the way it's going to be you don't have any say. So Trickel, when he left, he says, "Well, I'll tell you what," he said, "instead of one grievance in here this morning, you will have 10 tomorrow morning." So Jimmy Trickel got ahold of me and Ken Pullman [who] was a shop steward and he says, "We gotta come up with 10 grievances." So we met that night and we went through the union contract page by page and we could come up with nine.

So the next morning when we went in and talked to the shop foreman and Trickel says, "I'm normally a man of my word because I promised you 10 grievances, but I could only come up with nine. So here we go." (laughter) It was a lot of nitpicky things that...it just irritated Trickel. And so...Trickel was a different kind of a guy. I mean, yeah...A good shop steward.

Judy Matson: So Dennis, as a shop steward, you probably have the most contact with the workers. Were you ever having to tone people down sometimes when they wanted to have a grievance or how did you manage all the things that came to you?

Dennis Sain: We had several guys. We had one guy, they made a hooker a foreman. He'd been a hooker and they made him a foreman. And another guy who'd run the line machine come to me. He wanted me to file a grievance because they made this other guy a foreman, and he, "I have seniority over him. I should be a foreman." And I argued with him for three days to keep him from filing a grievance. I said, we have no say-so who becomes a foreman. That is not part of the union contract. And I mean...it was basically a knock-down, drag-out fight to get it through his head that the union has nothing to do with making foreman. There were several other little grievances. Guys wanted this. And I says, "It's not in the contract. You can't do it." And like I say, being a shop steward, you were badmouthed from the company side and you were badmouthed from the worker side. They remember the good things for about two days.

Frank Betts: It was a tough position to be in, to be a job steward.

Glenn Max Smith: They were special people, those job stewards, to be able to balance that like they did. I believe one story we had where a shop steward was tested, I believe it was Jim Frolich. But we had a guy working in the green storage down there, and a chair of lumber fell over. Well the supervisor wanted him to pick it up. He was complaining of a back injury and the doctor said he couldn't bend or anything like that. So he told that to the supervisor, "I can't be bending over picking this wood up." And the supervisor says, "You've been using this excuse way too long. You know that's not gonna cut it. You're gonna do it." And he says, "Wait a minute, Clarence." He says, "I wanna show you something." Stuck his finger up in the air and he says, "Now watch." He reached over to touch that bar. "Oh. It hit me. Oh, I'm done. I'm out [of] here." And he got ahold of Frolich and told him, "Boy, this supervisor bamboozled me, forced me into it. Messed my back up. I'm going to need some compensation" and all this and that and the other. And Frolich, he had a temper about yea long when he pushed him to the edge, that was it. I believe that was one of the first times. I see Frolich just, ... "I don't give a damn who you are. I've had it with you!" So that's why I take my hat off to the shop stewards.

Jim Hill: Shop steward and officers. Pretty dedicated people.

[01:15:05] **Lee Legried:** Well, one thing I wanted to say is that before the union come in with the Anaconda Company, now I understood you always had to work four hours without a break. And then as soon as the union came in, you got a 10 minute break every two hours. And couple of people weren't even used to that, but they thought that was really something there. But that's a policy that I heard. Before the union come in back in the forties, you worked four hours without a break.

Jim Hill: I don't know. 'Cause I know that as a result of what the union did, I know that there's a lot of changes went on, obviously. And thing is, I say that maybe nobody got rich working at these operations, but I tell you, they always made a pretty good living. They got pretty good benefits and as Max says, you got, most people got a pretty good pension and were able to do a lot of things that as a result of what the union did. That's one of the things, I'm very proud that I say that my dad helped organize this particular local, and my uncles and a lot of other people that I knew very well. And I was very honored to serve in a capacity as a business rep and as the area rep for 21 and a half years.

I run into people every once in a while and I still get a lot of people comment on thanking me for what I did when I was business rep. All I did was try to do what was best for... under the contract to do what was right for the people that I was representing. They were paying my wages and that's all I could do. I hoped I did the right thing and I don't feel guilty about a lot of the stuff I did because I was working for the people.

Frank Betts: One thing about what you just said about that 10 minute break. The company though, they didn't want to do it at first. Realized that, after awhile, that was a benefit to them as well because production went up in a lot of areas. And it therefore made them a lot of money. So a lot of the negotiations that these guys did was not just to benefit me or him or whoever. It was a benefit to the company as well. They didn't realize that. Sometime they got hardheaded over it, but it did benefit everybody and it benefited a lot of people, not just in the plant, but outside the plant too.

Jim Hill: That's true.

Kim Briggeman: 1942 was pretty late in the history of the mill to start a union. Do you know what precipitated it at that time?

Jim Hill: I'm not sure. I mean when Jim Willis contacted me and asked me if I'd come, I had this in my desk downstairs. And it just...and I really thought that the local was formed before that. But that's what the information in... and I really would've liked to get ahold of that charter. And it still could be down at the Union Hall. In fact, one of these days, I guess I'll wander down there and see if it is still there.

Kim Briggeman: One of the stories I heard was that the day after Pearl Harbor, the AFL was over here in Bonner, forming the union in December 8th, 1941. So I don't know why what the (unclear) issue there was.

Jim Hill: Well, I know there was a lot of conflict when they first started organizing. Because Earl Fuller, I'm sure you've heard that name, or maybe some people know him... obviously the older people... He was an advocate for the CIO, but as it turned out, the AFL and CIO ended up merging anyway.

So, of course, the Carpenter's Union, which our union was part of - it was the industrial branch of the Carpenter's Union - was the one that actually organized this plan. And I don't know why it came about. I think maybe the employees, like I say, my dad and a lot of the other ones of these old timers, they just decided it was time.

[01:19:54] I'm sure that a lot of was going on in Butte and other places like that decided, I don't know how much...I'd like to add a little more information...because I don't think wages were all that... And back when I made the comment earlier about my dad making a comment about the football team. Well, at that time they

weren't even working a full week anyway, and they sent him home and of course that's not a very good thing when you're not making much money to start with, and to be sent home for the rest of a week. You have no income.

Lee Legried: Part of that about when the union came in here, the White Pine and Sash had already organized, like you said, '37 or I would think '39, but they were already organized. And that might have had something to do with it about being organized out here. The saw mills were already organized in town.

Frank Betts: And a lot of that, not just here, but everywhere throughout the whole country too, was part of the industrial revolution. I mean, everything changing and everything's speeding up and the need for more product, not just wood product, but paper product and everything else in the country. And I think a lot of it sparked the unions to stop child labor. Labor laws come in and all kinds of things like that. They were changing right in that area. Not maybe at that specific time, but had done it somewhere else and they implemented it in other places to make things better for the workers. The companies were making good money. And it wasn't always that they shared it, but they should also take into consideration age and things like that and what they're putting on people, how many hours a person should work and that sort of thing.

Dennis Sain: Well, there was another impetus to help with the union that I've had related to me was Bonner had a baseball team and if you were a good baseball player, you got a job in the mill. Joe Blow here working on a machine, he might have been the best worker in the world, but he wasn't a good baseball player. He went down the road and the baseball player took over the job. And that was another impetus for the union. They got tired of guys being pushed out the door so a baseball player could take his spot. He's only gonna be [a] baseball player until the end of season and then the other guy gets called back. So they were getting tired of that. That was another impetus to help join.

Mac Palmer: Already had a strong president, president of the railroad union in this area. So there was already a strong union tradition in this area.

Glenn Max Smith: Yeah. Back in those days...I'm going through some interviews that I had taken with Lefty Pleasant and Howard Johnson. A few of the ball team players up here. And baseball at Bonner was a serious, serious thing. I mean, that original baseball diamond was built with I think... Jimmy Johnson organized a crew. Bill Kinonen and Arnold Tikkanen and a few of those old timers built that. But they were the Bonner Lumberjacks and the company was pretty proud of them. There was also the Missoula Highlanders. Another company. So the upper management gets to lay a few bets down. I bet you our team can whop yours and to guarantee that they did...why then... like Dennis says, the guy was a good planer here, but not a good second base, well he went out the door and second base but started feeding planer and that was one of the reasons.

Frank Betts: So another thing goes along with that. If you were good baseball player, you also spent so much time working on the ball field and keeping it up.

Glenn Max Smith: Yeah, I believe Ode, Arnold Odegaard, if you want to stir him up real good, you watered a little bit too much around home plate and the pitcher's mound. That kind of settled down out there and Ode took that real damn serious. Whoever was out on the lawn and soaked that up too bad why you dealt with Odie. That's for sure.

Dennis Sain: Oh, he called me down here one time on the weekend to take Mutt's [Teague] grader and go over here and work on the ballpark, and he didn't like the way Mutt had done it. It raised a few hackles - I down on a Saturday with Mutt's grader out here, fixing the ballpark. (laughter)

[01:24:58] **Kim Briggeman:** I know one of the Ode's pet peeves was the time when they put up lights and turned it into a softball field. You guys can actually...

Jim Hill: Yeah. I played the year that was a softball, but it only lasted that one year. One year was all we played. We played at the same league as in town. I was a catcher.

Kim Briggeman: So the base paths went from 90 feet to 60 feet and it just changed everything.

Jim Hill: Yeah, they didn't like that when those lights went up out there. They didn't last long. That one year.

Glenn Max Smith: Earlier I mentioned Bob Lurch tossing me out of the Highlander beer truck. There was also a game played out here. They didn't play it that often, but it's called Donkey Baseball.

several speakers: Oh yeah.

Glenn Max Smith: Where you, it was played like regular baseball, but when you hit the ball, you had to hop aboard your donkey and go around the bases and Big Bob had a kind of a cranky donkey. Didn't wanna run or

didn't wanna let him get on. So he just got an arm lock around the donkey's neck and drug him around.
(laughter)

Jim Hill: I think I managed to play in one or two of those games myself.

Glenn Max Smith: Okay.

Jim Hill: I'd just like to make a comment. I appreciate getting asked to come up here. I mean, I hope I didn't bore you with some of my comments or whatever. But I say it's been my life and I'm pretty proud of the fact that I've been a member of the union for over 50 years and I say that I was in such an integral part of the union for, like I say for 21 and a half years working full-time for the union. So I'm very proud of that.

Glenn Max Smith: I'd just like to add to that. Jim not only was dedicated to the union, but when he worked at the mill, he was probably one of the better crane operators that we had. Because he was the guy I looked to see am I up to this, can I do it as good as Jim Hill did?

And I don't know if I ever got to that point, but Jim was always my inspiration to get there. Yeah. I figure if I could get to that level, then I could say I'm a crane operator.

Jim Hill: There was quite a skill there for us.

Lee Legried: Jim, now you are here, while you are here is a good time to ask you about that. Like it would've been around March 20th of '63, the plumbers' strike with the plumbers from town. The plumbers here...they were union plumbers working for the Anaconda Company and they were gonna plumb in the new plant. Well, the union plumbers in town, they wanted that job. So they come out here and shut this plant down for 12 or 13 days because they wanted that plumber job to plumb in this new plant. But on the other hand, the company here, they had union plumbers. They had their own union plumbers in the plant. And personally I don't think that that strike ever should happen. Because they, the Anaconda Company, had their own union people to do that work. Do you know what I mean?

several speakers: (overtalking)

Jim Hill: I'd forgotten about that. But the thing is, of course, when you're young like that, and the thing is you're always instilled and you honor picket lines. And I guess that's what happened that time.

Frank Betts: Part of what was the fact that the company was installing the new high pressure fire main for the fire systems in the plant and the union plumbers in town felt that anything outside of this plant, outside of the fence was their job. And so that's why they pulled that strike off, which didn't last very long.

Lee Legried: You started about that same time?

Frank Betts: I started a year later.

Glenn Max Smith: Yeah. When that fracas blew up. The one thing, I'm not gonna mention any names, it was a hilarious situation. We had a personnel manager out here who says, "You can be a scab, and you can cross these lines. This is a whole bunch of garbage coming down here and we've gotta set up. You guys, come on in." We had one big kid come in. Well, in fact, we had several, they all managed to disappear outta here under kind of unusual circumstances. But the one in particular, he's gonna go across. Well, his mother had a logging outfit. Her husband had died. She's down the Bitterroot. She was still running this logging outfit, and she came up here when we were having this strike. Her son was gonna cross the picket line. She says, "No, you're not." And our personnel manager jumped on her and says, "He can, it's all cleared and this is how." And she turned around and I've seen big women hit guys before, but nothing like that. Put him right down on the white line, the yellow line down on the freeway or the highway out here. And she lectured him on why her son was not to cross that picket line and how and why she respected the union. And then she reaches down to get him again. She wanted to thrash on him some more. And he was like a break dancer. Everywhere she'd go to grab him, he'd spin around on his back, kick at her. That was an interesting time that day. And of course, with a bunch of mill workers out there, hit him again, hit for him me. (laughter) Judy?

[01:30:45] **Judy Matson:** Gentlemen, that was wonderful. Thank you. (applause)

(unclear) so much respect for the mill and the people that ran it, especially the workers. It's been a real pleasure to be able to work with these guys and with all of you. Fred Guenzler here is going to be away next month when we have our next meeting on February 20th, and it's going to be called Fire.

It'll be a good program. Fred is relating of getting caught in the wildfire in the mountains. We're also gonna have Chief Bill Colwell from the Rural Fire Department here, a mill worker, who now is the chief of the Volunteer Fire Department. And so he's gonna give his perspective.

Glenn Max Smith: Yeah, I just talked to Frank. Frank is gonna bring us up to speed on the internal pumping system and the water storage for the big tank.

Judy Matson: Okay. On the fires program. So it's gonna be a great program and I hope you can all come back, tell your friends. And this program, as all of our programs, will be re-broadcast on MCAT.

I'll try to get the word out so that you can tune in. And we also will have copies of the DVDs at the history center, which is in the Bonner post office building. So come visit us Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday afternoons between two and 4:30 and re-live some of the good old days. Thank you.

(Outro music and credits)



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The Bonner History Roundtable is a project of the Bonner Milltown History Center, 9397 Hwy 200 E, PO Box 726, Bonner, Montana 59823. Since beginning in 2009, programs are normally held the third Sunday of January, February and March, excluding March 2020 and all of 2021 due to the pandemic. The project has also been called The Bonner Area History Roundtable and the Working at the Mill Series.