

Larry Eickstaedt
Interviewed by Sam Schrager
The Evergreen State College Oral History Project
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FINAL

Schrager: Sam here.

Eickstaedt: Larry here.

Schrager: Happy to be here with you in your lovely house on Central Avenue.

Eickstaedt: Aw, thank you.

Schrager: Why don't we start with a bit about your parents, and how they met, and what they did and how you come into the picture?

Eickstaedt: I'll start with my mother. She grew up on a farm just south of Storm Lake, Iowa. She went to college at the local college, ended up with a bachelor's degree, majored in mathematics. This was in the 1920s. My dad grew up in Davenport, Iowa on the Mississippi. His dad was a carpenter, laborer. One of my mom's cousins from down in that area asked my dad if he wanted to go up to northwest Iowa, a little trip. So my dad came along, and that's when my mom and dad met. It was the first time my dad had ever ridden a horse. The story is that they didn't cinch the saddle tight enough. So he's trotting along and the saddle just slid over, and he ended up on the bottom of the horse. Well everybody made jokes about this city slicker.

Well anyway, they ended up getting married and they moved to Davenport, and had my brother there, who is eight years older than I am. Then I was born in Davenport, and when I was less than a year old we moved to Storm Lake. My mom was a school teacher for a while, and then she went to a little business college in Fort Dodge, Iowa, came back to Storm Lake, and she was working for the Ford Motor Company. And at that time Ford would deliver the cars in crates, and the guys in the garage would put it together; you know, these are Model As at that time. My mom, one of her jobs was to go over to the bank and make deposits and so forth. So she was well acquainted with the folks in the bank. While my folks were still in Davenport she got a letter from the bank president. He said he remembered that one time she indicated that they might like to come back to northwest Iowa, and he said, "I have farm that was foreclosed"—this was at the tail end of the Depression—"and just wondered if you'd be interested." So, they decided to buy this farm.

So they came back to Storm Lake. At first their plan was my dad would just get some construction job. He was a roofer. But then they thought, gosh, you know, maybe it would be nice to live on a farm. So they got busy and built a new house and new corn crib and new machine shed and chicken house and so forth. There was an old barn there that was in reasonable shape. Ended up moving out to the farm. So at 35 my dad had to learn how to farm. He didn't know one thing about it. A couple of my mom's brothers lived right around there. So they were pretty good assistants to my dad, teaching him the ropes.

So I ended up growing up on the farm. It was a hundred-and-twenty-acre farm. We raised corn, soybean, oats, hay. We had cows and pigs and chickens. That was far enough back that it was an organic farm because there were no chemicals then. (chuckles) That's where I grew up. Looking back on it, it was just a great place for a kid. There was a large grove around the farm buildings, so I spent a lot time out in the grove climbing trees and stuff. And the machine shed had tools and stuff to work with and play with. The barn, up in the haymow, big garden, and there was a creek that ran through the pasture, so I spent time down there looking for critters and what not.

My brother went to a country school. He started at a country school a mile north of us, and after that he went to the country school a mile south of us. The way it was set up was each township had its own country school, and there was kindergarten through eighth grade. Then in ninth grade the kids had to go into town to high school. And the year I would have started at the country school, they decided to close the school and then bus all the kids into town. So I missed that experience of a country school. But they had an auction at the country school, and my brother bought the entire library for twelve bucks. And the library was one cabinet, maybe about 3 foot wide and 5 foot high, that was it. Had an old set of encyclopedias, but then it had books for all those grade levels. So I had my own library, and I just read these books. There was one book, an old book on natural history that I really enjoyed. So I kind of got an early start on education at home just with that library.

That's where I started. And then I had a younger sister, three years old. So when we weren't doing farm work or garden work or playing, my brother, sister and I played football, baseball, basketball, depending upon the season. And my brother would pretend that he was announcing the game on a radio. So it would be the New York Yankees against the Red Sox. "Okay, and here comes Ted Williams up to bat. He hits a long one. It's going, going, gone. It's a home run!" Well, that meant that I must've hit one over the corn crib, you know. Every game was like that. He was really a good big brother. We had a great time.

Schrager: The kind of jobs and work that you got into in high school and that period of time: Can you talk about bit about that?

Eickstaedt: Yeah. Well, I guess growing up on the farm my first jobs were farm work. And my first kind of official job was driving the tractor on the hay rope, which meant that I would pull the tractor up toward the barn, and then they would hook on this hayfork onto a bunch of hay, or several bales of hay, and I would back up and the rope went in and through the barn and up across to a trolley. So then the hay would go up, and then it would go into the haymow, and then they would pull another small rope and it would drop it. Then the guys up in the haymow would stack it, and then I'd pull up again. So that was my job, back and forth, back and forth, you know.

Then I started to work for some neighbors, walking bean fields and corn fields, cutting out weeds. But then my first job in town was at a little grocery store. It was a grocery store on the corner, and it was so small that there were shelves that ran down the middle, so you came in the front door, got your cart, went down, and then the little meat market was in the back, then you came back the other side to the cash register—that was it. But we had everything there. And that was my first paying job, really, in town. And then from that job then I worked right next door at a Rexall Drugstore. Did that. And then in college: after my freshman year I worked at a YMCA camp as a counselor. Then I was working construction, built an educational wing on a church. Then a local guy who was an insurance salesman took me out for lunch one day and convinced me that “You probably should buy yourself a life insurance policy.” So, here I am a young kid and I buy this life insurance policy. My folks were just, “Pssshhh.” But later on, he asked me if I might be interested in being an insurance salesman. So I got some training and I did that for a while. But I really didn't like that salesman job. Then I got a job in a local hospital, working first in maintenance, and then I went up to the third floor and became a surgical room orderly. I helped with the preparations, and I was there for all the operations. And the chief nurse in the surgical ward, her husband had run several restaurants, but at that time he was in charge of the bar at the local country club there in Storm Lake, and he asked me if I could help out, so I became a bartender as well. So I worked at the hospital and then did bartending in the evening. Those were pretty much my jobs through school and college.

Schrager: So, college, when you went there, did you already have some idea of what you might want to do with it?

Eickstaedt: No, I didn't. I went to a local small church-related college right there in Storm Lake, Buena Vista College, which now is Buena Vista University. But, I really didn't have much of an idea, except I thought, well, maybe I'll be a teacher. But, during orientation we had to fill out different surveys and

they ask you what do you think you might want to major in or do, and I had no idea so I put down “engineering.” And the reason I did that was because when I was in high school, representatives from different colleges would come and give their spiel. Well there was an engineer that came up from Iowa State University, and rather than talk about all the wonderful things at Iowa State University, he talked about the engineering that went into the design and construction of the Golden Gate Bridge. And he explained the mathematics involved and how large the cables had to be and how many cables, all of that. Well, that left an impression on me, so I thought, maybe an engineer. Well, the person giving the test came back to me and said, “Can you be more specific, what type of engineering?” (chuckles) And I just took a shot and I thought, I think there’s something such as civil engineering, so I put down “civil engineering.”

But then I just started in, taking an array of courses, still with no idea, really, what to do. But I think maybe sophomore year I took a genetics class, and man I tell you, that really struck my fancy. So I decided I’m going to major in biology. So I was doing biology and chemistry and physics and math, and the whole thing, and then I thought, well I better do something about a career. So I took a few education courses, and after a couple of those I decided I can’t do anymore of those, I mean they were just awful. So I was kind of stuck. But then I was working at the hospital between my junior and senior year, and a couple of the doctors, one of whom was our family doctor, started to talk to me, because they knew me from working in the surgical ward, talking to me about *medical* school. Wow, gosh, never thought about that possibility. So I ended up applying to medical school at the University of Iowa, and was accepted. So. I got married between my junior and senior year in college. So we moved down to Iowa City. I had no idea what was going to be involved in medical school, what I was going to confront. It soon became very obvious that this was a cutthroat operation and I was up against mostly guys—there were a few women—but they had come from other universities or colleges that had premed programs. Intense competition to get As, and so forth. So although the subject matter was interesting, and I enjoyed that, but I just didn’t fit in.

Well there was a guy in my carpool—we carpooled from West Branch, Iowa into Iowa City every day, there were four of us that went to the university—he was in the zoology department. So, I was talking to him, it’s already starting the second semester, and he said, “Well, you majored in biology, maybe you ought to think about jumping over to the zoology department.” So in one day I dropped out of medical school and was accepted in the zoo department. So anyway, then I stuck with that and I got my master’s degree focusing on freshwater biology. So as you can see there’s a little bit of serendipity here how things happen.

Well, then the next thing, my major advisor at the University of Iowa, one day he told me, “You know, you won’t be a complete biologist until you spend some time at a marine station, and, if possible, spend some time in the Arctic or Antarctic.” Hmmmm. So then I started thinking about, “Well, I’ve been in Iowa all my life.” So I applied for a fellowship and headed out to California to the Hopkins Marine Station, Stanford’s Marine Lab down in Monterey. And at that time my intention was just to go to the marine lab and then come back to Iowa and continue on there. But then I thought, “Well maybe it’s time for a change.” So I applied to Stanford and was accepted. So I started at the marine lab, went up to the main campus in Palo Alto for one year doing course work, and then back down to Hopkins Marine Station. Continued on and finished my Ph.D. in Marine Biology. In a nutshell, that’s my educational experience.

Schrager: So, was Old Westbury your first academic teaching job?

Eickstaedt: Yeah, other than teaching assistantships at Iowa and Stanford. And then when I was at Hopkins, there’s a marine station just across the bay in Moss Landing, and the guy that taught marine ecology was going on leave and they needed somebody to fill in for him, so they contacted me—I was still working toward my degree—to see if I could fill in. So I went up there and taught there for one quarter, which upset the people at NIH, because at Hopkins I was being supported under an NIH grant, and they thought that was bad news that I was taking a break. But anyway, I did that, and then right around Christmas break 1968 I got a phone call from a young woman who was from Palo Alto, and she introduced herself: Phyllis Freeman. And she said, “I’m a student at the college at Old Westbury in New York, and we got your name as a potential faculty candidate.” “Really?” “Yeah,” she said. “My friend Joanie Silver and I would like to come down to Monterey and talk to you.” “Okay.” So they came down and they were there for better part of a day. I showed them all around the marine station, told them what I was doing, and of course they wanted to know ideas I might have for Old Westbury. And Old Westbury was an experimental college, state supported by the University of New York, and it had been going for I think two or three years at that time. And the provost was Byron Youtz. Anyway, after Phyllis and Joanie interviewed me, a short time later I got a call inviting me to come back to New York. So I went back, and I was met at Kennedy Airport by a group of about 10 or 12 young women. They said they wanted to spend time with me before we went out to Old Westbury, fill me in on what was happening. Well the school was on strike, and there was a big conflict about student admissions and how many students of color they were admitting and so forth. And so, students decided to go on strike. There were only maybe 200 students, you know. They were filling me in with all this stuff, all these rumors and whatnot.

So I go out there. I tell you it was the strangest experience. They were building the new Old Westbury campus on a former, about a 600-acre estate. And that estate had belonged to a guy by the name of Clark from Clark Threads, and he had married a woman from the Singer Sewing Machine family. So they had this big estate; that's where the new college was being built. The temporary campus was over closer to Oyster Bay, and that campus was once again a huge area which had been owned by a man by the name of Coe from the Baltimore-Ohio Railroad; and he had had a castle imported from France to his estate, and then it was all reassembled. So that's where the temporary campus was. All the offices were in there, except they had some temporary buildings as well. So I was there for about three days going from one meeting to the other. Of course there weren't any classes going on. I was able to give a seminar. I pretty much composed my seminar on the plane flying to New York. Of course I had to meet with Byron. First time I'd met him, and I'm really impressed with Byron. When I met with the president—Harris Wofford, he was a lawyer and he had been one of the top people in the Peace Corps, when he was working for Kennedy—when I met with him, we were talking about one thing or another, and he asked me, "If you came here, is there something that you'd really like to do that you haven't been able to do yet?" And I said, "Well, as a matter of fact, when I was an undergraduate I bought a set of the Great Books." You know, that 50-some volumes. I said, "I have never had a chance really to delve into them. In fact I haven't had a chance to do a whole lot of reading in the Great Books. But, if I came here, if I had a chance, it'd be great to do something like that." Well, his eyes *lit* up. Turned out he had been a student at the University of Chicago under Hutchins and Adler. (laughing)

Schrager: So, you got the job!

Eickstaedt: Yeah, so I came back to California and a short time later got an offer for a job. So, I finished at Hopkins. Just prior to that, on my birthday, July 20, 1969 was when they walked on the moon. I had started college at Buena Vista as freshman when Sputnik went up. So, I kind of spanned the space age. I defended my dissertation in the summer of 1969, and that went well. The day after, we took off for New York. I had never been further than Illinois, you know. So I ended up at Old Westbury.

Schrager: As you told me when we were talking, this connection between Old Westbury and Evergreen is deep.

Eickstaedt: Yeah.

Schrager: Can you lay that out?

Eickstaedt: Well, when I got to Old Westbury in the fall, and we had our early faculty meetings, it became pretty obvious to me early on that just about everybody that was hired there had been given the impression that if they came to Old Westbury they could do whatever they dreamed of, in terms of

academia. So there were all sorts of ideas being thrown around. The curriculum was just in a state of flux. It was just fruit-basket upset. And poor Byron, it was like being a babysitter. He's going from meeting to meeting and trying to get some clarity...exactly how? Well anyway, in all that confusion a guy who'd come to Old Westbury, Mervyn Cadwallader, he came from San Jose State. He talked about doing a program at Old Westbury based on what he had done at San Jose State, which was an honors program there. And Cadwallader had done this program at San Jose, and for a model he went back partly to the University of Chicago, but more to Alexander Meiklejohn at the University of Wisconsin, who had run an honors program there, very successful program, ran for several years. And then there was a guy at UC Berkeley, Joseph Tussman, who had a similar program. So Mervyn kind of used their ideas and put together his program at San Jose. So he said, "That's kind of like what I would like to do at Old Westbury." But, he's a sociologist, and what he was talking about was more in the social science-humanities. But given the options I decided I'm going to throw in with Mervyn. I'm going to take a chance.

So I did. And turned out there were six of us, and we ran a program that year. So it was Mervyn Cadwallader, sociology; Bob Sluss, who came from San Jose, biology; Saul Towster, he came from University of New York at Buffalo, he was a lawyer; Phil Campeneski, lawyer, he had come from St. John's, and Neil—blocking his last name—philosophy, I think he may have also been at St. John's, and then myself. So there were six of us. We ended up with less than 40 students. (chuckles) So we got things organized, and then it came time to decide about seminars. We did the mathematics, well that would be a very small seminar. So we decided we'd team up. So Sluss and I teamed up, so we had a seminar together.

We were in the temporary buildings, and there were, I forget, how many of these buildings, and they were linked together. Some of them were dormitories. Well, some mornings when we had our seminar some of the students would come to seminar in their pajamas. (laughing) Oh, but in spite of all the confusion and what not, we had a good year.

My wife and my little boy John, was about four years old then, we lived on the estate where the new campus was being built. We had an apartment in a triplex that had been servants' quarters. So to get there you pulled off the Long Island Expressway, got on a frontage road, and then came to a big gate where when it was a functioning estate there was a gatekeeper there; came through there, drove up a winding lane, and then up to where the buildings were. And then Bob Sluss lived on that estate as well. And there was what had been the horse stables, and it was a quadrangle. It's all out of brick, four sided, two stories with the exercise yard in the middle; the upper stories were mainly for storing hay and grain

and so forth. But Sluss lived in an apartment that had been the jockeys' quarters, or the jockeys' room. So he and I rode to school every day, usually in his old pickup. And Mervyn lived in a little house on the estate.

Well then about middle of the year Mervyn was hired to be one of the first deans at Evergreen. Shortly thereafter they started having meetings every weekend here in Olympia. So Mervyn from New York, Don Humphrey, he was at Oregon State, Charlie Teske from Oberlin, they flew here to Olympia. And there was Charlie McCann, and Dave Barry was the provost, Jim Holly was the head of the library, Joe Shoben was the executive vice president, then Dean Claybaugh was vice president for business. They would hold these meetings over the weekend, laying plans. Then every Monday, I think, Sluss and I would drive to Kennedy Airport, pick Merv up, and take him back out. And so he was kind of getting paid both sides of the fence, because he was part time at Old Westbury. So we kept hearing these stories about what was happening in terms of planning.

They had one big meeting one of these weekends to decide what to do about the curriculum. So, each of those folks presented their ideas, from the president down to the three academic deans. So Merv presented his idea. And his idea was that he wanted to set up an honors college as part of Evergreen. It would be an interdisciplinary two-year program for freshmen and sophomores. And he described the work he had done at San Jose and Old Westbury, back to Meiklejohn and blah-blah. When Merv came back that time, we picked him up and his comment was, "They bought the whole thing." We said, "What?" He said, "Well, I presented my idea, and at the end of the day they decided, well, if it would be good enough for a small number of students it ought to be good enough for *all* of the students. So we're going to start with interdisciplinary programs." So that was a big decision.

And then they had to start hiring some planning faculty. So Merv talked with me. I only had that one year of experience at Old Westbury. But, I don't know, I guess he was impressed enough to recommend that I apply, and I did. During that time, Old Westbury sponsored a conference for experimental colleges and programs. So there were people from all over that came there for a weekend. And the folks from Evergreen came. So I got interviewed for the Evergreen job while I was still at Old Westbury. So I met Charlie McCann and Dave Barry and the three deans and so forth. Next thing you know I had a job at Evergreen. Once again, we moved all the way across the country, so we made two cross-country moves in less than a year.

Schrager: So, in deciding to leave Old Westbury for Evergreen, at that point you were already at a school that was experimental. But, Evergreen sounded better.

Eickstaedt: Yeah, it did. For one thing, we didn't really fit in real well there in New York. But, in terms of the plans for the future: in spite of Byron's best efforts to get faculty organized, there was still laissez-faire sort of attitude. "I'll do my thing and the hell with you." Some of the faculty, they were living in New York City and so forth, and so they were commuting out to Old Westbury maybe a couple days a week. They did whatever they did. But there really wasn't much of a plan of what was going to go on. Whereas with Evergreen, for one thing it was back to the West Coast, it would be close to the water, and it was something that I had some experience with, and I knew a little bit about how interdisciplinary programs worked and how much fun they were. Especially the faculty seminars. That was probably the best part of being there in New York. With that crew of people, ah I tell you, we had great faculty seminars. Student seminars—eh, you know, the students were really...it was a pass/fail sort of arrangement. So anyway, I came to Evergreen that first year.

Schrager: Did the faculty seminar at Evergreen, then, come from the Old Westbury faculty seminar?

Eickstaedt: I think it goes all the way back to Meiklejohn in Wisconsin, that's the way *he* structured it: that the faculty would have their seminar each week. And so Merv did that at San Jose and we did it at Old Westbury.

So then, the academic deans had to recruit and find the planning faculty. So in the letter that we got, we were asked to write an essay describing what sort of an interdisciplinary program we might do. I remember in my essay I quoted Beryl Crowe, because Beryl had written a paper in *Science* magazine called "The Tragedy of the Commons Revisited," which was a response to Garrett Hardin, who had published "The Tragedy of the Commons." Garrett Hardin was a biologist; Beryl, a political scientist. Beryl's argument was that Hardin missed out really by not expanding his argument to include the social sciences and the social dimensions of that idea of the commons. I was really impressed with Beryl's paper, so I quoted it in my essay. Low and behold, Beryl Crowe turns out to be another planning faculty. The deans made it very clear that if we came to Evergreen interdisciplinary studies would be *the* focus: that's what we were buying into. We all came with at least that tacit understanding. Not everybody bought into it a hundred percent, but anyway, we knew that was the plan.

So when I got here, I actually got here early. Dave Hitchens and I were the first two planning faculty to arrive. He was unemployed, I was unemployed, you know. We went out to the college, and everything was in temporary buildings. Charlie McCann's office and some of the other business people, they were in what had been the old slaughterhouse. The Home Meat Service used to be there, and that's where they did the butchering and everything. Well, that had been converted, and that's where they were, and there were these other temporary buildings, and one was for the faculty. And then I

remember one day Merv came by and he had a list of the planning faculty, and he said to me, "Well, I'm working on assigning offices, so you have to choose an office mate. I assume you want to be with Sluss." I said, "Well, I don't know, let me look at the list." So I looked over the list, and here was: "Sid White, Art." I said, "You know, art is one of the things I know the least about. I want him for my office mate." So he was my office mate, and it was a good choice. Sid and I had a great year together, and out of that I designed a program called, Environmental Design. One of the influences was a book by Ian McHarg that had been published a few years before called *Design with Nature*. That ended up being one of the starting programs, the Environmental Design program. I think there were something like eight or nine programs that first year for a thousand students. All interdisciplinary programs, except Al Wiedemann finagled and had his own little thing called Evergreen Environments, and Pete Taylor joined him. They ended up calling it a "group contract" for lack of a better term. The name "coordinated studies," we had a little contest among the planning faculty and Merv said, "We need a title for what we're doing." So Richard Jones came up with the idea of coordinated studies, so he won a bottle of scotch. But we started with those programs and a thousand students.

Schrager: So what did the term "coordinated studies" mean?

Eickstaedt: Well, the first thing would be that the studies would revolve around a central focus or a central idea. Everything would be coordinated with that. Whether it was the seminars, the lectures, the field trips, the films, it would all revolve around that central focus, they would be coordinated. So that's really what it meant, you know. And then the idea of the faculty seminar was central: that it wouldn't just be a matter of four or five faculty getting together and each one teaching their own course, but they would be seminarizing on the books and leading seminars on literature that was out of their field. I think in a nutshell that's what coordinated meant to me.

Schrager: So that's a focused way of thinking about interdisciplinary studies.

Eickstaedt: Right. So you bring all those disciplines to bear on a central idea or central focus.

Schrager: Can you talk some about this planning year and what the atmosphere was like? You already mentioned that you were able to plan your first program. I assume that was one significant piece of work that the faculty had to do. There are these different things that had to be figured out. And there was also a social reality with people coming together and being around each other for some period of time, starting this new enterprise. But it hasn't started yet.

Eickstaedt: Right.

Schrager: It's a very interesting moment because it's not onstage yet, it's all backstage.

Eickstaedt: Yeah. Well, let's see, shortly after we got together we had our first faculty seminar, all the planning faculty together. And the book we read was a book by Joseph Tussman from Berkeley called *Experiment at Berkeley*. And that described what he had done. I forget what title he used, but it was a Coordinated Studies program. And we had the seminar, and it was a pretty spirited seminar as I recall, because for the first time, I think, several of the new planning faculty, it dawned on them, "Oh, *this* is what we're going to be doing. Whooooa. Ohh, okay. You mean we're going to read some social science book and I have to lead seminars? Oh, I see. Oh, I see," But then, Tussman also laid things out in a rather rigid manner. I remember Hitchens making a comment, "Boy, you can almost hear the jackboots in the background." But we had that seminar, and so that gave us a context of what to start thinking about in terms of a program to design.

The next big event, really, was Willi Unsoeld—he was one of the planning faculty members, and he took us out on a kind of an Outward Bound experience. We went up north of Cle Elum to Mount Stewart and we camped there. (laughing) When we were at Old Westbury there was a student there that lived in a teepee the whole year, through the winter and everything, and at the end of the year the student was going somewhere, and Sluss inherited his teepee. So he strapped the poles and the canvas and everything on top of his pickup and drove all the way across the country; so when we went on this Outward Bound experience with Willi we took the teepee along, and several of us slept in the teepee. So we cooked together and everything. But then Willi had us do various Outward Bound-type experiences for community building and what not. They were really fun things. Like he'd find a big tree stump, and we'd see how many of us we could get up on top of the tree stump. So everybody is holding on and grabbing people and pulling them up and everything.

Another one: he strung a rope up between two trees, it must have been eight or ten foot off the ground. The idea was you had a group of guys on one side; you had to figure out how to get everybody up and over that rope. No ladders. So we were trying to figure out how we are going to do this. But I think the second day he took us up the mountain. So we start up, fairly gradual climb. I remember Charlie Teske had loafers on. And Richard Jones, psychologist, he was petrified. It wasn't very long and he was almost on all-fours. We went up and it just got steeper and steeper, and we ended up on a rock ledge. It was a sheer drop-off off—you know, it's like a fishing tale, it always seems bigger than what it really was—but it was at least a hundred foot, maybe 200-foot drop, and we're sitting on the rocks behind. And Willi is standing on the edge of the precipice, on his toes. And you know, I can't remember how many toes he had left, most of them got frostbitten, and he lost his toes on Everest. He's standing out there, talking to us, blah, blah, blah. Then he says, "What we're going to do today, men, we're all

going to repel over this cliff.” (laughing) So he proceeds to rig up the ropes and stuff. “Okay, who’s first?” So one by one we go over the edge and repel down. That’s the first time I’d ever done it. That was great fun, just bouncing back and forth and getting to the bottom. Charlie Teske, with his loafers on, he’s talking the whole time. He’s up there at the top, and there were several of us down below looking up. Willi gets him all roped up. Charlie starts down, he’s talking the whole time. About halfway down he got turned upside down. So Willi fed the rope and let him down, talking the whole time. So we got a hold of Charlie and turned him right side up and got him off. But Dick Jones, he was sitting up kind of by himself, and he absolutely *refused*, “No way am I going to do this.” So before any of us started, Willi went over and sat beside him and talked. And it was a very quiet voice, so we couldn’t hear exactly what he was saying, but whatever he said was a psychological miracle. He convinced Jonesy to go over the edge. And Jones did. So all of us made it to the bottom and, whew, great jubilation when Jones came down. Oh man, that was great.

And then the next day, I think, we went up the mountain, and there was kind of a ravine and a ridge, a path at the top that curled around. So we started up, and then somebody down below yells up. And Willi said, “I’ve got to go down. Okay, you guys, you have to go across there and then you can come down the other side.” So there we are. Well on the way up, we’re going up this chute composed of all different size rock fragments. Richard Alexander was ahead of me, his big feet: he’s digging in to get a foothold and he’s kicking rocks back. Nobody had helmets or anything. Ah jeez, so we’re dodging rocks and what not. So I took off and got ahead of him. We went across this thing, no guidance, and it was narrow, I mean, pfft, we could have fallen off. Well, we got down. But that really was a great experience. Sitting around the campfire and eating and all that, you got acquainted with people. Well then, we came back down to Olympia and started into work.

We were planning those first programs. We had to design an evaluation system. So we worked on that, and then we had trial runs of writing evaluations, and then we critiqued different formats. How are we going to talk about the work in the program, and how are we going to describe what the students did? So we came up with a dual evaluation system and so forth. And then we had to come up with a governance plan. So that was another big job. We actually invited some students from the University of Washington to come down, and there were a couple of students who were hired to work with the library staff. And one of the students, he became the go-to student during the planning year. I mean he wasn’t a student, but he was a young guy, so any time we wanted a student viewpoint we’d call on Tim. So the governance plan, we got that worked out.

And then another big job: we had to hire 30-some new faculty for the first teaching year. So we went through over 7,000 applications. It was just stack after stack. I can't remember how many weeks we spent going through applications. Winnowing them down to decide, okay, who are we going to invite for interviews and so forth, and then starting the interviews. There were lots of potlucks that first year, and parties. Oh man, we had wonderful parties. And then every time a faculty candidate came, well they had to be wined and dined. Some faculty would go with them out to eat. And then during the day they'd be going from office to office talking to people, and then partying at night. Then we'd get together and compare notes and finally winnowed it down to, I think it was 35 or so new faculty hires.

There were other odds and ends that we had to work on too. We had to figure out what to do about independent study. I was part of a crew that worked on that, and we came up with the individual contract—the design for the contract and all that. Then internships, that was another thing that we knew we were going to do, and there was a guy hired to be the coordinator for that. We finally were able to get a catalog out. The first catalog. Before that, the admissions folks were going around to these high schools and community colleges, describing this new school. And then people ask, "What are you going to study there?" "Well, we're going to do coordinated studies. Can you imagine mixing biology, sociology and philosophy all together? Wouldn't that be wonderful? You wouldn't have these separate classes. And we're not going to have grades, we have evaluations." Well, finally we got the catalog out, whew, so then they were relieved and at least they could go out and say, "This is what we're going to offer." And then of course we had students who would come by to visit and check things out.

Well then, during that time they were building the library. That was the first building. And it was running behind schedule. So early in the summer, it was quite obvious the library was not going to be ready in the fall of 1971. So the administrators debated back and forth: what do we do? We could delay opening a few months. We could wait and start in January, or we could wait a whole year, wait until everything's ready. Charlie McCann said, "No. We're going to start on time. And you guys were hired to be innovators. *You* have to figure out where you're going to meet your students off campus." Yeah, so during the summer we were all scrambling around trying to find camps or wherever. So, one of the programs actually met in the legislative building. Another program went over to eastern Washington. Willi Unsoeld took his program up to Mount Rainier. I found a Girl Scout camp up on Hood Canal, Camp Robbinswold. So that's where we went, the Environmental Design crew. We met the students on the temporary campus in the parking lot, and then piled into cars and we'd go up there. We were there for a week and then we came back to Olympia.

And we also had to find places for the students to stay: their dormitories weren't quite ready. So they were camping out in various places. So the Environmental Design program, we came back to Olympia and we met at the Episcopal Church. I had gotten acquainted with Father John there. I volunteered for a youth program, we met with kids and hung out with them and what not. I was impressed with him.

Backtracking a little bit. Another thing we did in the planning year to promote town-gown relationships: Joe Shoben, one of the vice presidents, organized times when we faculty members could ride with policemen. I volunteered to do that. I did it twice. The first guy, he was an older cop, pretty crusty, but it was good enough. I volunteered again. That time I was with a young cop, and we really hit it off, we had a great time. I went back a second time to ride with him, and he ended up coming to Evergreen a few years later. Oh, and then they organized these dinners where faculty and townspeople would get together for dinners, another town-gown thing.

Anyway, back to Environmental Design. We went to the Episcopal Church and we held our first seminars in the Sunday school rooms. We gave lectures. Phil Harding gave a lecture on drawing from the pulpit of the church. And then we all went outside and did some sketching. First book we read for seminar was *The Little Prince*. We figured that would be a nice, light introduction. Phew, had a great seminar! At least I did. At the end of it one of the students who was older, probably in her mid-30s, she had her associates degree, and she just broke down crying. And she said, "I don't think I'm going to be able to do this. This is just too much for me." Because students were really into it, and talking about some really heavy stuff. From *The Little Prince*, if you really go with it, you can get in pretty deep. Well anyway, we calmed her down and I met with her afterwards. She ended up being probably the best student in the program that year. It was just an amazing transformation.

During that first year we started the Cooper Point Association. We designed a park for the city of Lacey. Phil started a project called Experimental Structures. We saved and started the Organic Farm. Our students were going to the Board of Trustees with these proposals. We want to save the Organic Farm and here's why, blah, blah, blah. "Okay, we're going to save the farm." Because they were just going to bulldoze the buildings and let it go back to trees. A couple of the students said no, we want to start an organic garden. Then Phil, this Experimental Structures idea? Once again they went to the Board of Trustees, and the idea was students would design temporary structures built on the campus where they could live. And then after a period of time they'd take them down and other students would come along. The Board of Trustees said yes, we will do that! (chuckling) I mean we had a dynamite year.

But when we started during the planning year after the new faculty had been hired, we sent out a survey, “Which programs would you like to be part of?” Environmental Design was number one. Then when it came time for the students to sign up, we had to fill the Environmental Design program with first choice, second choice, third choices, maybe even some fourth choices. It was really an odd mix, but it was a success anyway.

Schrager: *You* are coming into this program as a biologist.

Eickstaedt: Mmmhhmm.

Schrager: How do you fit biology? Or did you leave it behind as you did Environmental Design? What was the relationship? Seems like an interesting challenge for you to start.

Eickstaedt: It was. The ecology was what I drew upon, ecological principles. To do design in an environmentally responsible manner, you really had to understand some ecology and apply that to the design. That was kind of what I drew upon from biology. And then Carolyn Dobbs was from urban planning, Phil Harding, architecture, and Chuck Nisbet, economics. So that was kind of the mix. I think Chuck probably had the hardest time figuring out applying economics to that notion. But he did. During that year he had lots of guest speakers, including Dan Evans when he was governor. We decided to invite him out.

Another thing we had to figure out was where in the library are you going to have your program? I looked at the architectural plans, and I saw there was a corner in the northwest corner of the library on the second floor that had already a lounge area there, but it was surrounded by individual offices. So I went to Jerry Shillenger, director of facilities, and I said, “What would happen if you left out some of the walls and created four faculty seminar rooms?” “That’s great we’d love to leave out walls.” So that’s what we did, we had our four office’s seminars around this central lounge, that’s where we did our lectures and guest lectures: pretty much revolved around that. So Chuck Nisbet goes out to the circle to meet Dan Evans, and he brings him in. Here we are and here’s all these hippy students, you know, long hair, overalls, you name it, all sitting on the floor. Dogs. (laughing) But he was very gracious, you know, and he talked about—I mean it was his idea to start Evergreen, and why he wanted something different from any of the other colleges and universities. We talked about what we were doing. We had a really nice visit with him. It came off okay. Oh gosh, *everybody* else was envious that we had the Governor to our program. (laughing)

That was kind of my contribution. Then I was coordinator, and that was kind of a nightmare at times. The students were all over the map, as you can imagine. I mean they were all pioneers. There were only two upper-division programs that first year. The rest were considered, we called them “Basic

Programs” at that time. We had a lot of transfer students, and a lot of them had bad experiences at other schools. There were lots of interesting issues to deal with. Lots of counseling went on.

Schrager: Was the challenge for students to form community together or was the challenge individual psychological problems that students had? How did you see what these students were facing?

Eickstaedt: Initially it was part of building a community. It turns out it was an advantage that we started off campus at that Girl Scout camp, because we were cooking together, camping there. We did a lot of stuff there to start that. And then we went to the Episcopal Church for two weeks.

It took a fair amount of effort to try to get everybody more or less working together. But we had students with psychological problems. And the counseling center that year was fairly busy. Drugs, there were lots of issues related to drugs. And then there was also some of the students wanted to go off on individual pathways, so trying to fold them back in, try to stay together. “Nah-nah-no, I just want to do *this*.” During those first years one of the big issues was retaining students. I mean it was really tough to recruit enough students. Getting those first thousand was pretty tough. A lot of them came from out of state, a lot from the East Coast. I don’t know what the percentage was, but a fair percentage came from academic families. Their parents looked at what Evergreen was doing and they thought, “Man, wish I were teaching there! I think you ought to go there.” So that created some interesting issues. Some of the kids weren’t very well disciplined. But in an effort to retain students I think we had to be a little bit loose. Couldn’t be as hardnosed as you want to be for fear, “Well, they’re going to bail out.”

I think many of us in that first year ended up doing a certain number of individual contracts on the side, because there were a group of students that just didn’t seem to fit into the programs. I remember Charlie Teske, he was one of the academic deans, man he had students in his office all the time who were doing individual contracts with him on all sorts of things. But everybody was pitching in. And even the staff people were sponsoring contracts. That was another thing that developed during the planning year was the idea that everybody on the campus was a resource. In the library they actually had one or two people who were kind of go-to people to help students figure out: “Well, I’m really interested in engineering.” “Well, let’s hook you up with Daryl Six in the Facilities Department.” Or, somebody: “Ah, I really wanted to do business.” “Well, go talk to Ken Winkley over in the business office.” So students were all over the place doing contracts and stuff. Larry Stenberg was the first what you would call a dean of students. That wasn’t his title, but he did an amazing job of having activities where the whole campus would get together. I remember one time we had a retreat down at Millersylvania, and it was for faculty and staff. So it started off with a series of questions like, “Do you consider yourself a city person or rural person? City people on this side, rural people on this side.” “Do

you consider yourself liberal or conservative?” And then people would switch. So it was back and forth, back and forth. But it was a lot of activities where people got acquainted with the staff people and staff people got acquainted with the faculty.

And then the only place to eat was on the fourth floor of the library, that’s where the cafeteria was. So at noon time it was just a mix of everybody. And Charlie McCann, he was always there for lunch. And he’d always sit at a table, and it would be a mixture of students, faculty, staff members. Charlie McCann would join in. Students are asking him questions and he’s asking them questions, and back and forth. So that cafeteria was really an important ingredient for community building for the first couple of years.

It was a struggle all these different things with students and various issues.

Schrager: So the hierarchical relationship that we knew with students and our faculty in our undergraduate and graduate education was changed.

Eickstaedt: Radically.

Schrager: In this relationship that the faculty at Evergreen had with students right from the beginning.

Eickstaedt: Right, we were all on a first name basis. No Dr. so-and-so, nn-nn, it was all first names. It wasn’t President McCann. It was Charlie McCann, right on down.

I forgot to mention that the evaluation system that we came up for students, that became the evaluation system for the whole college. So the president’s staff and the academic people, they wrote evaluations of each other. They had their own. And that was true in the library. Everybody was being evaluated with narrative evaluations. So that was another important ingredient in terms of a sense of community. We’re all being treated the same. No tenure for the faculty. So can’t pull rank.

Schrager: Should we take a little break?

Eickstaedt: Sure.

[End of Part 1]

[Start of Part 2]

Just to backtrack, to talk a little bit about the curriculum and those sorts of things: During the planning year, after we had been together maybe a month or so, talking about interdisciplinary programs and beginning the process of that, a couple of the science faculty decided that the science faculty should have their own retreat to talk about how we’re going to teach science. Well, Bob Sluss and I decided not to participate, partly because we sensed the reason for the retreat was not just to talk about planning science programs, but maybe to kind of undermine the notion of interdisciplinary

studies. So we didn't go. That retreat was, I think, important in an historical sense because it did set in motion a movement on the part of some of the faculty to think more in terms of just disciplines, particularly the sciences. Then, during that first year of teaching, there were all sorts of questions being raised by students and faculty and so forth about "How in the hell is this really working? Is it going to succeed?" Many, many questions. And some folks started to get cold feet. So we had a couple of meetings of the faculty to talk about how things were going and whether *maybe* we needed to do some refinement. I remember Ed Kormondy talked about Colorado College. And Colorado College had started doing this block program where you took one course intensively for, I forget, a month, I think three weeks, and then you'd move onto a new course. Right away some of the faculty thought, "Let's bail out on this interdisciplinary idea and let's adopt the Colorado College idea." And then others of us were saying, "Hey wait a minute, we're still in the midst of experiment." Although Charlie McCann never liked that idea of an experiment—because Richard Jones had written a lengthy pamphlet or book called, "The Experiment at Evergreen." Charlie says, "This was not an experiment because we were doing things that were based on other programs that were successful. So we're not coming up with something brand new." But in any case, there was a tension there about what should we do? Should we throw everything out and start again? Revise the whole curriculum? Fortunately, the prevailing opinion was let's stick with what we got going here and not change anything yet. But, once again that was a current that continued to blossom. It's still a tension at Evergreen of the split between folks that really are committed to interdisciplinary studies and other folks who would rather stick more on the disciplinary side. So that has a long history and it started way back at the beginning.

Schrager: As a science faculty, can you recall how your colleagues were thinking about this? How they reconciled this question of science is involving sequential learning, how that can be handled in a coordinated studies framework? I can see why for science faculty it would be difficult to rethink that. Then you and Sluss and perhaps some others were clearly ready to do that, to rethink it.

Eickstaedt: Right. Well, let's see: how to approach this. I think in terms of how we resolved that issue was eventually came up with a model of coordinated studies, group contracts, individual contracts. The idea was that all incoming freshmen would start with a coordinated studies program. And then, gradually, they'd move and begin to focus more narrowly until they'd do individual contracts, internships. That was kind of the model we came up with. Some folks actually argued that we should make it a requirement that they have a year of coordinated studies. And that was one of the debates we had during the planning year, was whether we were going to have any requirements whatsoever. Some of us argued at the minimum we should require a year of coordinated studies. Other people said, "No

let's not have any requirements." Charlie McCann was there at that meeting, and finally he said, I think these were kind of his words, "If a student comes here and wants to throw pots for four years, so be it. We're not going to require that student do an interdisciplinary program. We will rely on good advising, and so forth, to urge them to start that way, but we're not going to require it." Well of course then the issue was, well how soon can a student start moving toward the disciplinary focus? Once again the best we could do would be to rely on good advising. And the students, when they came to the admissions office they knew that that was what we wanted them to do. And then later on when we started academic advising, Kirk Thompson was the first academic adviser, I was the second one. I did it for two years. Every student that passed through they went to admissions and then they came to see me. So we reinforced that idea of coordinated studies, but no requirements.

In terms of how I and Bob Sluss and some other science folks resolved it within coordinated studies was to talk about those aspects of science that fit into the theme. And then, if a student got excited about something to do with chemistry or physics or biology, okay, next year or the year after, you can pursue that. But for now we're not going to teach you Biology 101 when you're a freshman. And some students wanted that. It was a little too wishy-washy or whatever. But for me also it was a matter of ethics that I really base on my own experience going through college and university: was that more and more there was less and less talk about the social, political, ethical aspects of science and what scientists were doing. So I really felt that that was one of the things that I needed to do was to inject those things into whatever program I was in and in the seminars. I took it as a serious matter. Some of the faculty in the sciences they would have a little discussion each week—what did they call it? "Sanity seminar." They had a special term for it, but it was just a nod to doing a little bit of something different outside of the sciences. But anyway, that was my approach, and I know Sluss felt the same way, that any of the scientific problems that we were trying to discuss, there was a strong ethical element to it that needed to be discussed. It wasn't enough just to learn the facts.

Schrager: Did that mean that students who wanted to study with you in scientific areas that were your areas of expertise it was still possible for them to do so?

Eickstaedt: Yeah, I tried as best I could, whenever I would teach marine biology from time to time—a few times I taught freshwater biology—and in addition to the straight factual information I always tried to inject, promote discussions, and I actually chose other reading material. And I always had seminars as part of those programs. I remember Barbara Smith, she came for her annual review to sit in on my seminar. I think it was a freshwater biology program. Afterwards she told me, "I never understood how you could have a seminar on something like that, but now I understand."

Schrager: So how *could* you have a seminar like that? What did she see?

Eickstaedt: (chuckles) Well, in addition to the subject matter, why, we were discussing the ramifications of what we were studying, because of other stuff that I either recommended them to read or they had on the reading list. Maybe not always a book, but maybe a paper. It might be something like “The Tragedy of the Commons” or “The Tragedy of the Commons Revisited” to open up the discussion. And then just one-to-one, I tried to raise those questions, and then continued to argue with other faculty. (laughing) And then when we started the Masters in Environmental Studies, there was a push to try to make it a Masters of Science rather than Environmental Studies, but fortunately we structured the MES program around the model of the undergraduate interdisciplinary programs, so it was always at least one science faculty and somebody from the social sciences, so there was always a mix on the faculty. And so the seminars once again ranged across the map. And most of the students when they did their thesis or their capstone project—it was called something else, it was an alternative to the thesis, they could write a long research paper—that as much as we urged them to make it fairly broad. So it’s a good thing that we did it that way.

Schrager: Thinking about Beryl, you mentioned him as an inspiration. Do you want to talk about him, what you recall him being like? I have this sense of him being a very important figure among faculty and the influence that he had.

Eickstaedt: Yeah. Just a little bit about his background. He started off in Oklahoma, and he’s partly of Native American background. His family migrated to California, so they were part of the Okies that came to California. They settled in Watsonville. They were involved in farming. Beryl didn’t finish high school, he joined the Merchant Marines, and he was a radio man on Merchant Marine ships. Somewhere along the way, he got introduced to the Modern Library books. I don’t remember if it was a crew member that recommended it or he stumbled on it himself. But in any case, he started reading Modern Library books, and when they’d go to port he’d find a bookstore and buy some more books. He was really a self-educated guy. And then when he left the Merchant Marines I think he worked for United Airlines, went to San Francisco State for a bachelor’s degree, and then he went to Berkeley for a Ph.D. program in political science. He didn’t finish his dissertation, but he was hired at Oregon State University. So with his background he knew a lot of literature and political theory. He just knew a heck of a lot just based on his reading. Then in graduate school he just blossomed.

He was at Berkeley during the sit-ins and so forth, 1965, 1966, Mario Savio—he was there during that time, and he really got involved in all that. When he went to Oregon State he was kind of a rabble-rouser there. Don Humphrey, one of the first deans at Evergreen, came from Oregon State, so Beryl

came to Evergreen. I think Don Humphrey knew him somehow, so that's how he ended up at Evergreen. But while he was at Oregon State that's when he read "The Tragedy of the Commons" and then he wrote the response, "Tragedy of the Commons Revisited." And then he and Garrett Hardin jointly had lectures various places around the country, and they would argue back and forth, you know. So when Beryl came to Evergreen, why it became obvious pretty quickly that this was a guy we're going to have to deal with. Because he loved to argue. Didn't matter what the issue was or what the field was, he would come up with an argument. Not necessarily always the best argument. During the planning year he was going to be in charge of a program called Political Ecology. But then, I can't remember exactly how it happened, but Ed Kormondy was hired as one of the new faculty, and he became the coordinator of the Political Ecology program that first year. And Beryl joined with Byron Youtz and Sid White and I think Fred Young, and they did a program called Space, Time and Form. Really a great program. And then the next year Beryl came up with a program called Politics, Values and Social Change with Rudy Martin and Betty Estes, and that was a dynamite program. When we met for lunch up on the fourth floor, the faculty and the students from that program, the discussions just continued on. I always got involved. I just knew this was a guy I need to hang around with. Yeah, we got to be good friends.

Then two years after that, Beryl came up with the idea for a program called Marine History and Crafts. So it was Beryl, Byron, Pete Sinclair and myself. The way we planned it was that each quarter we would have a visiting faculty member. So in the fall we had a marine historian, in the winter we had a boat designer, and in the spring we started building a 38 foot wooden boat. And we had a hundred-and-some students. That was just an unbelievable program. The logistics to pull that off—it was something else. In the winter quarter the students worked on designs for a wooden vessel that would be a sailboat but could be used for fishing under sail. And then in the spring, there was a boat builder shop here in town, Long Boatworks. The original owner was Hank Long Sr.; he had passed away by the time we started and his son ran the boat works. And the boatworks was on the west side just a block or so off Division Street, tucked back in, and that's where we started building the boat. We had to find the lumber and all of that, and students started building a boat. A lot of the students had never handled a hand tool. So we started from scratch in the fall, simple projects, sawing a board and all that. And then maybe with about a month to go in the spring quarter, we had the keel laid, all the ribs in place, and we had just begun planking the boat. And then a fire broke out in the boatworks early in the morning. A few of our students got their early that day and they started the boiler for the steam box where we had been steaming the ribs and then bending them, and then you'd put the planks in there to steam them, and bend them and clamp them in and so forth. Well, a fire broke out and very quickly the whole

boatworks was gone, including our boat. What a devastation, especially for the students, oh man. But anyway, that was one of the most ambitious interdisciplinary programs that I was ever involved with. It was a mixture of some marine biology, and math, and physics, and we did literature, we read *Moby Dick* and so forth, and then politics, political theory, it was all one big mix. But, Beryl was the catalyst for that, and then Pete was the coordinator. That was the third year of the college. And I remember when Dan Evans became president, that was one of the programs that he talked about. I remember him saying, “Boy, if I had been a student that’s the program I would have done.” It was a great program.

I had some other good programs. Reflections of Nature, I did that one with Rob Knapp and Hiro Kawasaki and Thad Curtz. All revolved around nature and looking at it from science, art, literature—yearlong program. I had a student here, he came by on Monday, he was a student in that program, Reflections of Nature. In the spring quarter, each of us decided to offer a little course on the side in addition to the seminars and everything else that was going on. So I did a little course on Freshwater Biology, and Joe was one of the students, and he got hooked on aquatic insects. So now he works at Glacier National Park for the U.S. Geological Survey working on aquatic insects. (chuckles) And he’s just having a ball. He says, “I get paid for going out in the field, going up to the mountain streams, collecting insects.” In the winter months he works in the lab. As he was leaving, walking down the sidewalk, he turned and he says to me, “You know, if it wasn’t for you I’d probably be pumping gas.” (laughs) That was a great program.

One course I did I designed from scratch, and it was called Restoration Ecology, and I kind of caught wind that there was something happening on the national scene around this idea of restoring habitats. So I went to a conference in Chicago, the Second Annual Meeting for the Society of Ecological Restoration. It was really an interdisciplinary conference, because there were science folks there, there were folks from the humanities, there were Native Americans that came. One of the people that showed up was Barry Lopez. And when I got there I looked at the list of the participants—they had them all on the board, you know—and I saw Barry Lopez, and I knew his book *Artic Dreams*. So maybe the second evening of the conference I was sitting in a little lounge there, and I was writing in my notebook, and here sitting across from me was Barry Lopez. Do I talk to him or not? So anyway, I struck up a conversation, and we ended up talking for probably an hour. And I asked him, “What’s your interest of being here?” He said, “Well, I’m really interested in the idea of restoring the landscape.” Then we talked about that. Then I remember coming back and I think I was telling Pete about that, that I saw Barry Lopez and he introduced this idea to me about restoring the landscape. Well as you know, then it took off from there.

One of the field trips I went on during that conference was to the Fermi Lab, which is south of Chicago. At that time they had the biggest cyclotron in the world. We went out there, and it's quite a large area, and it was built on farmland. The cyclotron is about a mile in diameter. If you could look at it from the air it's like a giant donut that has been plunked down on the farm land. There is this mound that's a big tunnel with all the magnets and everything, and then there's a pond around the outside continuously circulating water to cool the magnets. And then on the edge is this *big* building, about 13, 14 stories tall, kind of a shape like a big A. And then if you walked inside to the atrium you looked up and you could see all of the offices and labs had glass, so you were looking inside, and then on the top floor was where the director was. Well there were a couple of botanists from back there, and they had started collecting seeds from prairie plants from old railroad right of ways and old cemeteries. And they went to the director of the Fermi Lab and asked the director if it would be possible for them to start a small chunk of prairie inside the ring of the cyclotron. It was just all former farm fields. Well he said okay. So they started with 12 acres, and they scattered the prairie seeds. The first year the weeds just took over. And they went back out there in the summer and, "Oh man, this is going to be a failure." But then they looked down and they could see these little prairie plants underneath all the big weeds. In the fall they did a burn, they burned off the dry weeds. Next year the prairie plants started to grow. And then they started harvesting seed from that and expanded. I was there in 1989, I think, they were up to over 200 acres of prairie inside the ring of the cyclotron, and we got to go out there. So here you are, standing on this prairie where they're trying to take something back several thousand years, and then looking at the building, and here these guys are splitting the atom, you know. (chuckles) God, I tell you, what an experience.

Then I went on a field trip up to the University of Wisconsin, and Aldo Leopold had been there at the University of Wisconsin, and when they dedicated the arboretum he gave a talk, and he said he thought it would be wonderful if they could start a plot of prairie as part of the arboretum. This was during the Depression, and there were a group of I think a couple hundred CCC workers camped there outside of the university, and they were prepared to do projects. Well, they got them involved, and they started a prairie there in the arboretum. I got to walk on that original prairie with the guy who had been in charge of it, this old guy, his name was Ted Sperry, and he was up in his 80s. We're walking along, "This is where we experimented with this, and then we did this." I came back and put together a program on Restoration Ecology, and I offered it first in the MES program. Phew, man I tell you, what a great, great program. It was really a course, but it was an interdisciplinary course.

Anyway, those are some of the highlights. I can cap it off. I can talk a little bit about what I've done since then.

Schrager: I think we should have another session.

Eickstaedt: Should we? Okay. That would be fine with me.

End of Interview

—Transcribed by Lori Larson