

Interview Transcript: Bob Johnson's Third Life Story Interview

Interview date: August 26, 2011

Prepared for the Sonoma State University Field Stations and Nature Preserves

Introduction

This is the third of a series of three interviews with Bob Johnson. The purpose was to record the highlights of Bob's life story. Questions used for the interviews were partially based on selected questions from the StoryCorps list for life story interviews (storycorps.org). Questions were developed by Matt Thompson, and additional questions were provided by Terri Yost (Bob's daughter).

The interview occurred at Bob Johnson's house in Pacific Grove, CA on August 26, 2011. Matt Thompson conducted the interview and prepared the transcript from the audio recording. Informal off-topic conversation was not included in this transcript.

Interview Transcript

Bob Johnson: I remembered a couple of things you asked me about earlier, my earlier years in elementary school and high school. This doesn't have anything to do with school particularly. One of the things I've always enjoyed and look forward to, when there was a cattle operation, we had an annual roundup in the spring when we rounded up all the cattle, sorted them and branded them. Of course, a single ranch doesn't have enough hands to do that by themselves. They all help each other out. We put on a big picnic. All the families come. It's a big get together for all the people who have cattle. It's an all day event. You get up early in the morning and go up in the hills, bring the cattle down out of the hills, get them into the corrals. By the middle of the day everybody else starts showing up, bringing food. It's just one of those things you don't forget because it was a highlight of the year in the cattle ranching business.

Matt Thompson: When was that?

BJ: When I was growing up. It was happening the whole time I was growing up. It was still happening after I decided I didn't want to be in the cattle business and wanted to be in the vegetable business. I got away from that as I grew up and became an adult.

MT: They were growing the vegetables down in the valley, so where were the cattle?

BJ: We owned some land on the valley floor. We were just raising cattle on it and raising barley, stuff that depended on rainfall. There was no cultivation, row crops, or anything like that. Most of the cattle were up in the hills.

MT: You didn't grow any vegetables up in the hills did you?

BJ: Not in the hills. It's not flat enough and getting water up there is another problem. On the valley floor you have the water source and relatively flat ground to put the water on.

[We take a short break.]

BJ: Where were we? I was talking earlier about the roundups. You see those things in the movies. It was just like that. We had this big canyon up there, with the corrals. We brought the cattle down. There would be 50 to 100 people. Everybody would bring food and all the tables to set up, the whole deal. Especially as a young kid, that was a big deal. In those days you didn't get out much in life. Not like you do now days.

MT: Did that happen once a year?

BJ: Yeah, it was an annual event. It's like shearing wool, every spring you shear the sheep.

MT: Everybody would go out to the different ranches to help out?

BJ: Not at the same time. They were helping each other. They would talk to each other. All the ranchers knew each other. They would say, we're going to do our cattle such and such a date and they would mark their calendar. Maybe the next week they would go and do one of the other ones. That way you had enough people to get it all done in one day. If you tried to do it with just the two or three cow hands you had on your own operation it would be almost impossible. It's just the way they did it. There was no other way.

MT: So everybody knew each other really well and they would have this roundup to finish this up for the year?

BJ: It was more than just cattle branding, it was a social event. They made a big social event out of it. It was an all day deal. It's like a barn raising. One guy can't build his own barn. He could, but it would take him a year. So you get everybody together and do it in a couple of days. You don't have to do a barn every year, but you have to do your cattle every year. That was probably the most exciting thing about being involved in the cattle ranch. The rest was mostly work. That was work too, but they made a festivity out of it as well. There was another incident I remember that happened in high school. This fellow, Michael Murphy, that started the Esalen Institute, was a very good golfer and captain of the school's golf team. I'm pretty sure it was our junior year, in 1957, when Bing Crosby brought his Pro-Am tournament to Pebble Beach. The first ever here. Mike wanted to go to the tournament and we were talking one day. He said, you know I bet we can talk the attendance counselor into giving us an excused absence if we can bring her a movie star's autograph. There were a lot of celebrities in that tournament. I thought boy, you have a good imagination. He said, let's go ask her. So we approached the attendance counselor and said, if we can bring you a celebrity's autograph will you give us an excused absence? She thought about it a minute and she said, okay, but if you don't you're not going to get an excused absence. So we went over there and we snuck in, we didn't pay, which was a lot easier to do in those days. Mike knew all the big-time golfers, Ben Hogan, Sam Snead, Jimmy Demaret, he pointed them out to us. So then we started hunting celebrities. We couldn't get near Bing Crosby. Finally we got a guy, Dennis

O'Keefe, who was a movie star but he was never big-time like Clark Gable and some of the other big ones. He was big enough to get us our excused absence. I learned more about golf that day than I had ever known. I didn't know anything about golf. Yeah, we asked him for his autograph. We knew who he was. They have their names on their caddy's back too. They also announced them by name when they're teeing off. It turned out to be pretty easy. That was in the late 1940s. The big stars were Jimmy Stewart, Clark Gable, Bing Crosby, Tyrone Power. He had a lot of starring roles but he was never the big-name compared to the other guys I mentioned. Anyway, we just did that on a lark. So I've been to the first ever Pro-Am at Pebble Beach. It's the AT&T now. I didn't realize at the time what a big deal that was. Since then it's gotten bigger and bigger.

MT: Did you get close enough to Bing Crosby to see him?

BJ: Oh yeah, and Bob Hope. We saw a lot of then prominent people there. There are also the big CEOs of corporations there, star athletes, pro football players, basketball players, and the whole bit. I've seen a lot of celebrities over there over the years.

MT: That reminds me. I didn't get a chance to ask you earlier, did you play sports at all?

BJ: I didn't get a chance to because practice was after school. I was a senior by the time we had a car to get to school and by that time there didn't seem to be any point. Everybody was way ahead of me on everything as far as training and the whole bit. We played intramural sports, but not on the teams that played other schools.

MT: Did you have a favorite sport?

BJ: When I grew older and became primarily a fan, I think football became my favorite sport and has been since my college days.

MT: I figured you wouldn't have much time for sports when you were younger because of that bus ride you had to take back to the farm.

BJ: No, there wasn't the time unless you could arrange somehow to get a ride. It wasn't in the works. One good thing about that bus ride, there was a girl there. I think I was a freshman and she was a senior. I rode with her one year. I remember the first time I got on the bus. I was only 13 years old and here's this beautiful blonde girl sitting there. She looked like a goddess. She said, do you want to sit here, so I sat down next to her. She introduced herself and I thought boy, she really likes me. I found out a long time later that there was a guy who got on at the next stop that she didn't like and she didn't want an empty seat next to her. That's the reason she invited me to sit next to her! Anyway, later she became Miss California. So I can say I used to sit next to Miss California on the school bus. In the late 40s she was Miss California.

MT: So, I wanted to cover the subject of children and grandchildren. When did you first find out that you were going to be a parent?

BJ: Well, it had to be in 1956. My first daughter was born in November, 1956. That's Robbie.

MT: Do you remember when you found out you were going to be a parent and how you felt about that?

BJ: We were excited about it. We intended to have children so it wasn't a surprise or anything like that. You always hope that everything works out all right. I don't think there was anything different from anybody when they find out they're going to be a parent for the first time. You're excited, and then you start getting concerned about your wife. She's the one who's doing all the work. She came through it just fine and delivered a healthy baby.

MT: Did having a baby change things in a way that was different from what you were expecting?

BJ: Not really. Of course it changed things in the house. That's for sure. We carried on and did everything that we did before. In those days you didn't do as much as young people do now days. I see people with these little tiny infants in expensive restaurants. That would have never occurred to us to do something like that at that time. They didn't have McDonald's or any of that stuff. We would have to get babysitters if we wanted to go out for a social event. That was fine. My parents lived less than half a mile from where we were. Both houses were on the farm. Sometimes they would just go up and stay with my mother if it was just for overnight or something like that. Other times we would get one of the older girls from one of the neighbors. It was very convenient. I had a neighbor who had five daughters, all several years older than ours. So we used all five of them over the years.

MT: How big a role did your parents play in taking care of the kids?

BJ: Not a big role. They saw them a lot because they were there on the ranch, especially when the kids got old enough to have free run of the ranch. I don't think they had any more role in taking care of them than any of their other grandchildren. They had a lot of grandchildren, 10 I think.

MT: Did your children grow up on the farm?

BJ: Yes, they all grew up on the farm.

MT: Could you describe each of your children?

BJ: Robbie was the oldest. She got there first. Actually we weren't going to name her Robbie but everybody said she looked like me and so we named her Roberta. I said I'm not going to call her that. Actually her name was Roberta Lynn and we were going to call her Lynn but everybody called her Robbie and that name stuck. So, now she's Robbie. They were all good kids growing up. They all worked on the farm. They'll tell you that

they did. They learned a lot working on the farm, learned enough to know that when they went away to college they were never coming back. There were better things in life than working on a farm. Of course they didn't experience being an owner/manager of a farm. They experienced the workers end of it. That probably didn't hurt them a bit. They learned to drive at a very early age just like I did. They were driving tractors and pickups. We just had dirt roads on the farm because it wouldn't be practical to pave them because your tractors and everything would just beat them up, and all the heavy trucks. To keep the dust down we watered the roads and we had a big truck with a big water tank on it. That's one of the jobs I think all three of my girls did at one time or another. It was to drive the water truck. Right next to the well where the water comes out, where the pump is, we had a big deal and they would back the truck under it. There was a 1000 gallon tank on the truck and it took about a minute to fill it up. They would fill it up then go out. It took two of them. There was no power steering or anything like that in this old truck I had and it took all one can do just to drive the truck and the other one had to manhandle the valve to open the water so it would spray out on the road. That was one job they all had. Anyway, Robbie did well in school. She was involved in 4-H club, as they all were, and she raised sheep and pigs.

The biggest and longest running project they had was Guide Dogs for the Blind. Altogether they raised eight or nine of them for the guide dog school in San Rafael. My wife grew up in Marin County and she would see these dogs being trained on the streets around there. She thought that would be neat to be involved in something like that. When she got down on the farm and found the 4-H club had this program she eventually became county leader for the guide dog segment of the 4-H club and oversaw all the dogs in the county, not just the ones in our house. It's almost like being one of those agencies that puts kids out for adoption. She would go and interview the families and see if they were suitable and if they would do the right thing. They got the dogs soon after they were weaned from the mother. They were just little puppies. The job that the 4-H are was to do was to socialize the dog and to give it basic training, housebreaking, and get them used to being around people and around other animals. We had other animals. If you have someone who is blind and the dog is leading you and a cat runs across the street in front of it, you don't want your dog to bolt out after it, or being spooked by something, a bigger animal or something like that. These were the kinds of things. They would get used to the noises and things that went on in the house. A lot of dogs flunked because if you run a vacuum cleaner close to them they freaked out. They would have a competition where all the kids who bring their dogs and they would have these obstacles and things that the kids had to walk them through. They would be scored on the reaction of the dog. They would have a vacuum cleaner going or turn on a fan, then you could see which dogs would have the right disposition to make it. That was a really interesting program to be involved in. Getting back to Robbie, being the oldest, she got the first dog. You are invited to the dog's graduation and to the presentation of the eventual owner. After we got them socialized after about a year old they go up and get the intensive training, the actual guiding part from professional instructors. We get to meet the individual who's getting the dog. It happened that the fellow who was getting Robbie's dog was a minister in Sacramento. We got to know him pretty well. He liked to travel a lot and so every time he traveled he would bring the dog back. We would take care of it for him. One day he said,

the dog found me a new stockbroker. We were going down the street and the dog walked in this door and he ended up opening an account in there or something. I said, we didn't train the dog to do that! When Robbie got married, after she graduated from college, he performed the ceremony for us. It astonished me while we were doing the rehearsal up at Quail Lodge in Carmel Valley, an outdoor deal in August, and it was foggy. He said, you stand by that tree over there and you stand by that one over there. I said, wait a minute. How do you know there's a tree over there? He said, I can sense it by the sound waves of the wind. I thought it was amazing that he could point to every tree there. That was really an eye-opener. Sue, being the guide dog leader, used our airplane to take the dogs our kids had to competitions, and to make presentations. I never had any idea when I bought it that it would be used for something like that. Another interesting story about this first dog Robbie raised, Sue was so excited about doing this because she had seen this going on in San Rafael as she grew up. The first thing she wanted to do was to take this dog out to a restaurant. The dog was just a little tiny puppy and when puppies get excited they pee all over the place. She had even cut out a section of the law that covers how restaurants have to allow these dogs. So we walked into this restaurant and this waitress spotted us. She came out and she said, you can't bring that dog in here, and Sue presented her with all the sections of the code, explaining this was a training guide dog. Meanwhile, the dog is standing behind Sue and I'm standing behind the dog and the dog is making a big wet spot on the carpet. I think we finally did eat there. I said, did we learn something on this trip? Yes, we're going to houstrain the dog before we try the restaurant thing next time. We never had that problem with all the rest of them. That was the learning curve.

MT: Who was your second daughter?

BJ: That was Cindy. She was born in 1958, in July. She was almost born on our wedding anniversary, missed it by two days. We were married on the 16th of July; she was born on the 18th. She was always the brain in the family. Still is, I think. She went through school, it was so easy for her, it was too easy. She is the one who went to Stanford. Robbie went to Texas Christian. Cindy got to Stanford and she found out that almost everybody there was at least as smart as she was if not smarter and most of them had good study habits, which she had never developed. Her first few years were pretty difficult. Stanford is different than your state universities because state universities have so many people who want to get in, if they have somebody who can't cut it they make a space for the next guy in line. Stanford hates to admit they made a mistake on their admissions policy so they give you one year. If you're not cutting it you can take one year out of school, and when you come back that's your last chance. So she had to sit out one year and during that time the light switch came on in her head. The way to get this done is to apply myself and study. She found herself right there in the heart of Silicon Valley making minimum wage, \$6.00 or so an hour and she would have somebody next to her making several times what she was as a salesman. She would say, dad, I know more than that guy does about the stuff he's trying to sell me and he's getting paid all that money. I'd say, is that right, I wonder why? Well, he's got a certificate, a degree in whatever. So she went back to school and I think she got straight A's. She graduated with a Mechanical Engineering degree. She worked for a lot of the big companies, Raytheon, Hewlett-Packard; I can't even name all the ones she worked for over the years. One summer she

was offered a job for \$1400 a month up at Bechtel Corporation. I think she actually took the job and she got frustrated with it because all she was doing was checking somebody else's figures and didn't have anything meaningful to do. She got wind of a, through friends or acquaintances, there was a group of mostly oilmen down in Texas who were going to launch the first private rocket into orbit. So she joined that group. We still have it on tape. They were going to launch it from a place called Matagorda Island off the coast of Texas. It was on prime time news when they launched it. Cindy told me afterwards, thermodynamics was her specialty, there was an oxygen valve on there, and she said that oxygen was going to be going through there so fast, if you don't put some kind of heating device on there, the oxygen is going to freeze and it will plug up and the rocket is going to blow up on the launching pad. By now these guys had cost overruns. It cost more than they thought it would and they said, how much will that cost to do that? It was just a nominal amount. They said they were getting tight on money so they were going to try it without. She said, your rocket is going to blow up on the launch pad; and it did! We have pictures of it on video. She was about 400 feet away from it behind a concrete bunker when it blew up. She always made life interesting. She came back and got her degree. She had been working for Hewlett-Packard, her last employer, and she decided she wanted to get an MBA. I asked if they had programs to help her pay for it. She said yes they do, but then I have to sign a contract saying I will come back to work for them for five years. When I get that diploma I want to have all my options open. I asked if she wanted some financial help but she said no I have it all figured out. She had bought a condo in Santa Rosa when she was working up there one time. She kept it and was renting it out. So she never asked me for a dime and paid for the whole thing. She got her MBA in 1992 at Wharton. Her first job was in management at Dell Corporation down in Texas. She moved around to several jobs and now she is an independent certified financial advisor. Because of her engineering background, blending that with her MBA; she became an authority on tech stocks. She did analyze better than most people, what these devices did, what they're potential was, and that kind of thing. Right now she's writing a column for at least one financial publication. In her Stanford years she did some interesting things in between her study time. You know that rest stop over there on Highway 280 past Woodside as you're going toward San Francisco? There's a statue of Father Serra pointing into the distance? She was working for the school magazine at the time. They were looking for something to put on the cover of the next issue of the magazine. So they got this big hose reel or something, got a big rope on it, and they took it up and they hung it off Father Serra's finger so it looked like a big yo-yo! According to what I heard, she was the lightest one in the group so she got to crawl out onto the finger and tie the thing up on there. So here came the cover of the magazine and there was the picture. Every time I go up past that rest stop I have to think of my daughter crawling out on that arm.

MT: Is she still located in the Bay Area?

BJ: Oh yeah, right in San Francisco; right underneath the Bay Bridge as I understand it. She moved recently but I haven't been up there since she moved. She says her view is the underside of the bridge.

MT: How about your third daughter?

BJ: Terri. She was born in 1959, September 30. That's coming up soon. She is one of those who get along with everybody, everywhere, all the time. I don't know if she's ever had an enemy. Everybody loved Terri, still do. She's the one we had home alone after the other two went away to college. We took her to Scotland with us because we didn't want to leave her home alone as a teenager when she was in high school. She loved that. That's where we met this English lady at a hotel we were staying at. We asked her where she lived and she said Nottingham. Terri's eyes got as big as saucers and she said, Nottingham? The woman said, you know, Robin Hood and all that stuff. Terri blurted out, I should've studied my fairy tales better! I know exactly what she was going through. When you're a kid and you read fairytales, then you read something else that has some basis in fact, it's hard to distinguish what's real and what isn't. When I was still working at the aquarium these kids would come up to the touch pool where you have starfish, and different kinds of crabs and snails. They asked, are these real or are they make-believe? This is an aquarium we have live specimens here. Kids at an early age have a hard time distinguishing real from something that's made up. Anyway, we went to Scotland for a clan reunion so she met a lot of distant relatives of my wife. In fact, I think she and Robbie went back to Europe and visited one of them. He was from Jamaica. They thought that he was in the CIA because of just the way he acted. You never could pin him down on what he did for a living. One of those kind of guys.

Terri went to Fresno State and graduated from there after four years. She was a good student. She didn't think she was because her next oldest sister was such a whiz. I think Terri is, if not the smartest of my daughters, equal to any of them. She comes up with stuff now that just amazes me. She's a very perceptive person. She learned to drive quicker than any of the others. I knew from the minute she started driving she was going to be a good driver. She's still probably the best driver in the family. She started driving at around 11. You start early on the farm. She wasn't that big. One day she was driving this pickup back and forth. She was working, or was supposed to be working. She went by my father's house and he thought it was a little too fast and he stopped her and took the keys away from her! Going back to Cindy, I had an incident with her. She was with me while we're driving across this field and I hit a wet spot and got stuck in the mud there. I was at the edge of the field close to the road but I couldn't get it out of there. The famous water truck happened to be parked nearby so I went and got the water truck and backed it up to my pickup. I hooked the chain to it and I put the pickup in the lowest gear, the wheels were just barely turning. Cindy was just 10 years old then and she was the only one with me. So I said, okay Cindy now I'm going to get into the truck and I'm going to pull you out of the mud. When I start yelling at you and wave my arms, turn off the key. The reason I had to stop was because there was a 15 foot ravine just ahead of me. So sure enough, I'm looking in the rearview mirror and I see the pickup getting traction and so I start waving at Cindy, turn off the key, turn off the key! She didn't know about pushing in the clutch or taking it out of gear or anything. So that's why I said all you have to do is turn the key. So she didn't turn off the key and I got the water truck right to the edge of the ravine. I didn't want to turn the truck because then the pickup might have gone over with Cindy in it. So I just stopped and bam! It was only going about half a mile

per hour so it put a big dent in the front but it was superficial damage. I got out of the truck and I said, Cindy, why didn't you turn off the key? She said, I forgot! I thought, here's this brilliant kid, she's probably doing some kind of mathematical formula in her head, and she forgot that all she had to do was turn off the key. Her eighth grade teacher actually told us that she will probably be involved with putting a rocket on the moon someday. The closest she came was the rocket that blew up on the launch pad. Her teacher was on the right track when he said that.

MT: What was it like when Terri moved out of the house to go to college?

BJ: Quiet. It didn't take long to get used to it. That's funny, this friend who just called me when you first got here, he has a couple of daughters. He's at the empty nest stage. His last daughter just went off to college. He was talking about the withdrawal symptoms that go along with that. We were busy enough. Once we got used to it, it was kind of nice. We didn't have to worry about where she was and what she was doing. She was on her own. Her husband went to Fresno State too, she met him there on a blind date just like my wife. So she never came home from Fresno. She had worked in Sacramento for a while and somewhere else when she first got out of school. When she finally got married they have been in Fresno ever since.

[We take a break so Bob can take his eye medicine.]

BJ: Terri was the only one who had children. She had two at once so that was convenient. Kristi is a twin. She has a twin brother named Kevin. I understand that she and Kevin are both working on the website for the preserve now. Kristi is a computer science major so she knows what she's doing. Kevin is not majoring in computer science but he's pretty savvy with that stuff. Kevin started at Fresno State and went there for two years. He grew up in Fresno, went to their football games, rooted for the Fresno Bulldogs, the whole bit. A lot of his friends were going to go to Fresno State. His parents said, we want you to go somewhere else and have the experience of living away from home, living on your own and the whole bit, just like your sister is going to do. I think Kristi fell in love with Sonoma State because when we got involved with them up there with the preserve and everything, she visited the campus a couple times and she decided that was the place for her. She's not a football fan or that kind of thing. Sonoma State doesn't have a football team. They did have at one time. Finally Kevin said, Fresno State was good enough for you two, why isn't it good enough for me? They said, well you got us on that one so they said okay you can go to Fresno State, but you are going to live in the dorm. You take care of your own laundry, just like you're 100 miles away. He did for his first year. He ended up in the first dorm that his mother lived in at one time, that Terri lived in. He's a good student and a serious student. After the freshman year he and some friends moved out to an apartment off campus because he said it was just too noisy there. He did a second year at Fresno State living in the apartment. Then he said, I think I made a mistake. Fresno State is not challenging enough for me. I want to transfer to Cal Poly. This year he's going to Cal Poly. I said to Terri, isn't that great, you tried to insist on him going somewhere else besides Fresno and he eventually figured it out on his own. You didn't force him to go somewhere else. He chose to go. I thought that was pretty

neat. He was told when he applied for the transfer that only 7% get in. He got in.

MT: Do you have any advice for your grandchildren?

BJ: Keep up the good work. They're ahead of me at that age.

MT: Do you have any advice for young people in general who have their whole lives ahead of them?

BJ: I think that early on you figure out that you only have one trip through life, so make the best of every minute and every day. You don't get to come around that way again. I don't think. Nobody has ever proven to me that you get second chances. Live every day like it's going to be the last day of your life. That's one that I've had people tell me. Whatever you decide to do with your life do it the best you can and don't let somebody else tell you what you should be doing. You decide and be the best at that as you can be. Good things happen if you do that. At least, that worked for me.

MT: Okay. I'm going to break away from the subject of children and grandchildren. What is your favorite travel destination?

BJ: Africa. I've been there six times, I think. We were supposed to go this last summer. I was going to take the family and this eye thing got in the way. I said, well let's postpone it one year. The kids were smarter on that one than I was and they said let's postpone it for two. This eye is not coming around. The doctors were saying three months and that was in January. I'm still battling it. So we're scheduled to go in 2013.

MT: Where in Africa?

BJ: Probably Botswana and Kenya. I don't know. I've been in quite a few countries in Africa with Sue. The kids have been only twice. They kept saying, why do you keep going back to Africa? Finally it was our 50th wedding anniversary year, we celebrated our anniversary there, so we said okay, if you want to know why we keep going back to Africa, come with us. They know now. In fact there's a picture of us right over there with us all on that trip. We took another trip four years later, in 2009, without Sue. We went back to the same place because there is a school on an island in Lake Victoria that we had visited. It was very poor. We did this with my children and grandchildren so they can appreciate what we have here. The kids there were this tall and were given a container to go get water to bring back to the house because there's no plumbing. We visited this school. I had my kids and grandchildren and got school supplies, pencils, pads of paper, crayons, soccer balls, and we gave it to them. I thought it was a good experience for the kids especially. Several months after we got home we got a letter from our guide who was a close personal friend. He first met him in India for a trip in 2003. He came and stayed with us during the royal wedding. We had taped it. He said he had to be farther up the peninsula at a certain time then he sat down and started watching the tape and he watched the whole thing. I learned more about the royal family than I ever cared to know, but anyway. We got this letter from him saying that a windstorm had blown the roof off

one of the classrooms and they didn't have any money to repair it, and they were teaching class underneath a tree there. He asked if we could help with a donation. Sue and I said we can do something. I put the letter aside for a while. I was busy running the farm at the time. One day I came back to the house and I said to Sue, we need to send a check to David for the classroom at that school. She said, I already took care of it. So I asked, how much did you send? She said, you don't have to know. So I said, okay, and she never did tell me. Anyway, two years later we went back, it was 2009, and David the guide had called and said, you know money goes a lot farther in Africa than it does in California. You sent way more than we needed to repair it. Can we use some of that money to put a plaque on the side of the classroom with Sue's name on it. So she has a classroom named after her on an island in Lake Victoria. I said fine. Later on he found out that I was coming again with the whole family and he said we'll have a dedication ceremony while you're there. So, we had to go back to that spot. It was Rusinga Island, off the coast of Kenya in Lake Victoria. We went there and we had this unveiling. They don't have the fancy stuff we do. They had a towel or something draped over it. They unveiled it and gave speeches and everything. That was really neat. Anyway, I found out there's still money left over after making the plaque and they're looking for a project. I said, well save it for a rainy day, that's what got you the last time. The kids really wanted to go back, as you could understand, for that. After that trip they said can we go to Botswana too? They knew I really liked Botswana. It's entirely different. It's a fascinating place. I said, but look at the map. Africa is a big continent and Kenya is way up here and Botswana is way down here. Why don't we do Botswana and South Africa? That was the trip we canceled because of my eye. Now they're talking about forgetting South Africa because it's a developed country. It's interesting in its own way, but it's not like the ones that have the great animal viewing and everything. So they're trying to re-jigger the trip so we spend some time in Botswana and fly back up to Kenya. The last time we were there they were having the Safari.com marathon at the preserve where we stayed. So, Terri wants to run in that marathon when we're there in 2013. She's training for it right now. They want to find out when the marathon is. At first they didn't want to be there while the marathon was on because of too much distraction and everything. We happened to have one day there while the marathon was running and they really enjoyed it. It was kind of fun to be there. This Safari.com is equivalent to AT&T in Kenya and they sponsor this marathon. They have helicopters and airplanes flying overhead spotting where all the wild animals are to make sure somebody doesn't run into a rhinoceros, or elephant, or lion. It was kind of a kick. Anyway, that's the plan.

MT: Which country were you in when you were there for your 50th anniversary?

BJ: It was Kenya. In fact, we were on the same preserve, called Lewa Downs. It's a 50,000 acre preserve they have that belongs to a family called Craig who are friends of the royal family. When we read that Prince William borrowed a helicopter from a friend and flew to some romantic spot in Mount Kenya to propose to his intended, we said, I know exactly who the friend was he borrowed the helicopter from. It was Mr. Craig, because they had a helicopter that they flew tourists around in. In fact, she was on the same airplane with us, the first time we went to that preserve. There was about a 10 passenger airplane and nine of us were our guide and our family. There was this 10th

person and she was sitting right across from me, a very attractive young girl. She was all by herself, very nicely dressed, and she was keeping her nose in her magazine not paying any attention to the rest of us. We finally landed on this dirt strip and she gets off, and then I get off, and the guide gets off, and this young man in flip-flops and shorts comes over and starts getting the luggage off the airplane. My guide tapped me on the shoulder and said, do you know who that guy is? I said, he's probably some kid who works for the lodge. He starts laughing and said, that is Prince William. I said, you're kidding! He said, you know who you were sitting across the aisle from on the airplane, that was his girlfriend, that was Kate! Kate Middleton. We came that close to meeting them. That was in 2009. I really got a kick out of it because it wasn't long after that they broke up, they stopped seeing each other. My girls were so bummed out about that. So they got back together and my girls were very happy about that.

MT: I just have one more question and it's off-topic. It's a question about Jean Galbreath. I heard she had an interest in astronomy and that has a connection to the observatory at the preserve. I was wondering if you could tell me more about her interest in astronomy?

BJ: I don't know if she was interested in astronomy per se, but because they have a lot of clear nights up there on the ranch, they would take walks in the evenings because the weather is pretty nice up there. She started getting interested in the constellations and the stars. If anybody in the family, if you wanted to go out at night when the stars were out you would go with her because she could point out everything and name it. I thought it was appropriate that the observatory should be named after her, partly because she was kind of the missing name in the whole preserve there. It's named after my father in law and she's kind of like an asterisk or something. I thought it would be nice to put her name on something.

MT: So she learned about the stars while she was up there?

BJ: It wasn't anything that she went to school for. She just took an interest in it and taught herself. She had been a school teacher before she got married. I think it was in Alameda. Her family had lived in Alameda.

MT: I've heard very little about Jean.

BJ: She's, like I say, the forgotten person in the whole deal. Since my wife isn't here I can say she's just like my wife. They looked alike, had similar personalities, she was just a terrific person. She was a great hostess. She put on some great parties. She was kind of like her husband. She was comfortable up at the ranch roughing it, and yet they had a very nice home down in Marin County where life was entirely different. It was like two different lives. In the ranch house up there, in the kitchen, it might still be there, I don't know, but when I first started going up there, right by the stove, they had a bell tower on the roof with a bell up there with the rope coming down with a handle. When breakfast was ready and everybody was out running around on the ranch she would just reach up there and start ringing the bell and you could hear that thing from miles away. I don't know if that bell is still up there or not. During World War II, in the victory Garden, she

was the leader in that. Bundles for Britain and all that during the war, she was very active. I didn't know her at the time, but I heard a lot of stories about her activity with that.

[end]