Rick Foote

Rick Foote, managing editor of the Montana Standard, interviewed at The Standard 1/7/87 by Teresa Jordan. Notes taken at time of interview; not a transcript; not audited against tape.

Q: Can we start out with your basic background. You were born and raised in Butte?

Yes. Grandmother and grandfather Torpy on mother's side from Ireland. Grandfather went to England early in the Century and studied dentistry; became ill and gave that up; migrated to Canada and eventually to here; worked in the mines. Grandmother migrated first, Rick thinks, to Chicago; ended up here. Met and married grandfather here. Had five kids. Irish Catholic. Grandfather died young; was hurt in the mines; sick for a long time.

On father's side, grandfather was born in Colorado, Rick thinks. Family originally from England. Grandmother was born, Rick thinks, on Isle of Mann, or her people were from there. That grandfather was a sawyer in the mine; worked at the Tramway.

Rick's father was a machinist. Never worked for the ACM. Worked for Johnston Electric for 40 years and then 10 years with Roberts Equipment. Retired for two or three years before he died. 50 years in the Machinist's Union.

Rick early education in the Catholic schools. He was expected to finish high school, but there wasn't any great push to go to college. College was his own choice. Degree in journalism at U of Mt in '68; then to Viet Nam for two years; came to the Standard in 1979; was a reporter; made managing editor in 1984; Editor in 1986.

Worked in the mines during college -- as a pump man at the High Ore; as days pay at the Leonard and the High Ore.

Q: What do you see as the benchmarks in Butte's development? For instance, it seems to me that the first federal monies to come to Butte through the EDA were important; the final shutdown of ARCO Anaconda was important. . .

The first model cities attempts were made under Tom Powers. The '67 strike was important. Vern Griffith began to move EDA money in -- he was a friend of Rick's family.

Before 1968, Butte still raucous town -- 14 S still open; the Missoula Rooms; the Dumas [whore houses). Gambling widespread -- punchboards, not slot machines. It was a good-time town. Officials looked the other way. No one paid a great deal of attention to vice; there was not a great movement to clean it up in the early 60's.

A change of attitude came with the 1967 strike. There had been a major strike in the 1930's, and then a short but violent strike in '46. It was pretty peaceful until 1952 or 1954 -- that was the last strike that they actually had scabs behind the fence. Then in 1959, the maintenance agreements, so that during strike the Company could maintain the operations -- no production, but maintenance without using scabs. Things began to change -- not just in Butte, but statewide. ACM sold the newspapers. There came the first buds of political awareness to fight the Company; and the Company's political influence began to wane in the state.

The farm-labor colation in the legislature that had formed in the 30's still had some effect -- there was a liberal bent to the legislature. Butte was still a major force in the legislature.

People saw the devastation of the '59 strike, which ran into 1960, 250 days or more. Rick remembers his mother joining other mothers at the civic center to make sandwiches for kids whose father's were out of work. Real poverty, like in Appalachia.

Then in the 60's, there was good demand for copper with the Viet Nam war. ACM recruited miners from W. Virginia. Leading up to the 1967 strike, there was a feeling that things weren't right. Then the strike really hurt. At the end of it, lots of underground mines remained closed.

The city powers began to realize that something had to happen to turn the town around. ACM's political influence was decreasing; also, the number of jobs were decreasing. They could see that Butte was going into a downturn. They got some EDA money.

Some feel that Model Cities was a waste -- what do we have to show for it. But Ric Foote doesn't agree. It got rid of a lot of blight, tore down a lot of old buildings -- and of course a lot burned down. And people developed the finest-honed expertise in Montana in terms of determinig needs and finding resources. People involved -- Don Peoples, Tom Cash, Judie Tillman; Jim Murphy and his trainees.

The original $22 Million, through Model Cities and other grants that facilitated, went to demolition, physical improvement of the streets, and many programs that people weren't even aware of.

After the 1967 strike, poverty like in Appalachia -- so programs like the well child clininc, hot lunch program, head start, senior citizens -- they were very necessary. There was an increased sense of the value of human beings that had been lacking before. Model Cities was structured so you had citizen input and people found that they did have a voice, they could be heard.

The town had been so dominated by the Company. The Co didn't have to own politicians, newspapers, etc. The old General Motors saw -- what's good for General Motors is good for the community. Sense that that was true in Butte and in MT. Yet Rick has heard thousands of times the saying -- "What the hell does the ACM think we are? A bunch of peasants in Chile?" Definitely, that underdog feeling was there - and deservedly so. The strength of the union through those years demonstrates by itself the need for it -- that people wouldn't have even as much as they had it they hadn't had the union.

And the main goal in Butte was to get your kids out of the mine.

Q: The beginning of federal monies for Butte was very important -- how did things happen before then?

The city had been an organized entity for a long, long time -- so the structure to collect taxes and provide services was there. Then there was a far more conservative county structure. When people wanted fire protection out there, they organized themselves -- volunteer fire departments; lighting districts, etc. There had been moves for consolidation two or three times before it passed, and it was soundly defeated: those who had pushed for it were ostracized. Lots of controversy in the '60's and early '70's -- Metro Sewer District fight was quite vicious, especially in the outlying areas. Before consolidation, to get things done, people banded together. Key players: people like Buzz Konen, who was with the Racetrack Fire Department. Dave Fischer from the Boulevard. Jim Casey with the Centreville Fire Department.

They could get things done, stay away from consolidation.

Q: What was the argument against consolidation? That it would increase taxes and lose jobs?

Yes, it would increase taxes for the outlying areas. And then there were the political fiefdoms -- the commissioners had a lot of power; the Sheriff, etc.

Q: Butte seemed so far behind other commjnities -- no zoning, for instance, until 1971.

Yes, that's true, but a lot of that, Rick has to believe, was the Company's influence, at least subtly. They didn't want zoning. They wanted to be able to do what they wanted.

For instance, the Company wanted to start the Continental Pit -- it was called the East Berkely at the time. And they had to have a place to dump the overburden. Schwinden, with the Dept of Lands, granted the permit without an Environmental Impact Statement. Cadillac v. State Lands went to the MT Supreme Court, where it was decided that Schwinden had acted illegally in granting the permit. Of course, it didn't matter; ACM didn't have to move the dump. But that was one of the first real citizen efforts to stem the move of the Company to do whatever it wanted to do. Around '76 or '77.

Tape 1, Side 2

Q: That was right at the end of Butte Forward, which had been based on the idea that we had to get out of Anaconda's way. Do you think that timing was significant? Was there the feeling that Butte had given enough to the ACM?

In about '74 there was a strike of short duration, and then that contract was up in 1977. The Company wanted to put a mill out in Rocker, Brown's Gulch. They wanted a haulage road therough Centreville. Meaderville had gone in the '60's. In the 70's, McQueen, the East Side, Centreville -- so much was gone.

Why the Council voted down Butte Forward is a mystery to Rick. There was the sense that if they relocated everything -- and it was a $50 M project to completely relocate the Uptown -- that sense of community in Butte would be lost. Rick thinks that people just couldn't, psychologically, bring themselves to make that decision.

Q: You hear that the movement failed because of the inability to agree on a site. Yet, if the movement had been that strong, it seems that agreement could have been reached. . .

Yes. If there had been the proper push behind it, ACM would probably have come up with more money; the Federal money could have been procured. Rick thinks that it was a psychological decision -- not of defiance, but of a deep inability to lose the Uptown. And the Uptown was a mess!

Q: In 1965, you saw your last major building uptown -- with the Prudential Building, First Bank. By 1971, talk of completely relocating the Uptown. That was a quick turnaround.

There was certainly no clamour for building uptown. There had been so much destruction -- fires. Penneys was a clear case of arson -- it went to Federal Grand Jury two times, and no indictments. Pennsyvania building was a proven case of arson, kids using it as a shooting gallery. The Medical Arts building -- Rick doesn't think they ever determined a cause. Intermountain Buildings, faulty wiring. And tons of small bars burned. There was the sense that the town was literally falling down or burning down. It was tragic. There was a sense of utter emptiness in the pit of your stomach after each fire. The community would be psychologically shaken for months after each fire.

Yet, no one gave up. The City Council decided no on moving the Uptown. And that was a relief, even though to look at the Uptown -- who'd want it?

Q: And once the Council voted no, there seemed to be a very abrubt change to rennovate the Uptown.

There was always revitalization through Model Cities. Uptown was made into a Special Tax Increment District. Also, Montana Power didn't move out of the Uptown -- in fact, they remodeled the Murray Clinic in to the Energy Building, they took over Hennessey's after the ACM left it, remodeled the Thornton Building.

And once again, saw that sense of historical value. There was the sense that the community was tied to the Uptown and it was not willing to abandon it.

Q: Do you think the community reached the extent to which they were willing to give up the town to the ACM? I have been surprised at how little protest there was as the Company moved into Meaderville, etc. I know that the Company treated people fairly there -- buying their properties, relocating them. And yet you would think there would have been more protest.

People did feel they were treated fairly in the relocation. But at some point, they began to realize that even though they came out ahead economically, it might not have been worth the destruction of those ethnic neighborhoods. There was not a great deal of protest because the community was inured to mining. Mining was its mainstay, and if relocation meant jobs, people would go along.

But there may have been at the time of the vote a sense that it had gone far enough. And there was sufficient community organization by that time to stand up for that -- yeah, we've had enough.

Also, it came at a time that it was becoming clear that ACM wasn't going to make it. When the company shut down the underground mines in 1974, a real turning point.

The Company had said on the record that if the community would abondon Woodville Hill, it would extend the life of the pit by so many years. But even at the time, no one really believed it.

When the uunderground mines were shut down in '74 or '75 and 1500 layoffs were announced in one day, that was a turning point, a realization that the Company was not going to be able to maintain itself on such a level.

Q: OK, in hindsight we can see that as a turning point. But did people REALLY see it then, really believe it? Sometimes I don't think people believed the ACM was going down even into the 1980's when all but a few hundred men were laid off. I'm not sure people beleived it until the gates were locked.

Up to 1975, the majority of people involved with mining were used to mining underground, and those people felt the sense of loss. Yet, on the other hand, there was not an overwhelming sense of doom, even with the loss of 1500 jobs. And in the state, there was not concern about Butte. Billings and Missoula and Great Falls were growing. No one realized what it meant until the Smelter closed in 1980 -- and still there was not an understanding in the state outside of Butte, Anaonda, and Great Falls. In those cities there was only an understanding that it was final becuase the Company, for the first time, said it was -- and paid closure benefits.

Q: When you look back at it, there should have been a realization when the first shovel of dirt was dug in the pit -- in '54, or '55 -- that employement would drop. the whole idea of the pit was to get more ore with fewer people. . .

Rick can remember as a kid -- his father was a great sidewalk superintendant, loved to watch everything that was going on. They'd drive over the East side, and his father would talk about how big the pit was going to be. There was the sense that everything was going to be OK because of this method of mining.

Even when the price of copper went down -- there was very little willingness to connect between the world and how that affected Butte. And Rick doesn't even think the Company made the connection at that time. In the mid '70's, there was still talk about the moly copper dome under the pit; about using underground mining methods to get to it once the pit was deep enough. The company sunk money into the Kelley for block caving, even when it had failed once before with the Greater Butte project. It was grasping at straws.

Q: There's that faith -- Butte is the Greatest Hill on Earth.

Yes. And the Rainbow Vein is the richest silver vein on earth, there is still gold, etc. Wealth is almost like matter, it cannot be created or destroyed. Only a few things can bring wealth -- and that's land, what's on it or what's underneath it. If there is the sense that there is gold there, there is that spark of optimism. Somehow, somebody will get it out.

And one of the things that is unique here is the length of time this camp has operated. It's said that every metal known to man is here in some quantity.

Q: In around 1969, Jim Murphy, head of Model Cities, made a comment about bringing Butte kicking and screaming into the 20th Century . . .and that seems to be about what happened from that point.

Yes, and Jerry Plunkett saying we needed to turn Butte from a mining camp into a think tank-- and that's what is happening.

Q: Again, I have to think this is so difficult for Butte -- to go from that primary production to a think tank. That idea has got to be hard for the long-time miners, people like Al Hooper.

Yes, it's difficult for Al and a lot of other people. Their realism is based on that ore in the ground. If you are a mining man, the prospect of $450 gold -- their eyes start to glow. And now you look at what is going on in South Africa . . .

Q: That's something about the metals industries -- whether its precious metals or primary metals like copper. They thrive on bad times, on unrest and war.

Butte's cycles, like we have talked about before, are all around times of war. Butte does well when there's a war on.

Q: And there has to be some basic contradiction in Butte's recent history -- Butte has always been so individualistic. I think miners are the cowboys of the underground -- yes, they are dependent on the big Company, but in their work they are very individualistic, and Butte has been very individualistic. And now the last 25 years are the story of government money helping Butte. There's something a little contradictory in that.

... A *little* contradictory! Yes! And Butte started learning that process through model cities. Rick cites what he calls the "Jim Murphy Program of Public Administration." Jim would throw out an idea that people hated. There would be a public hearing of perhaps 100 people, and 95 would hate the idea. Jim would take it all down. At the next meeting, there would be 50 people, and 25 would be against it, but 25 would be for it. At the next meeting, there would be only a dozen people, and six

would be for it. Then it would go before the City Council as an emergency measure; they'd suspend the rules to OK the grant. It would go into action, and everyone would feel they'd had their say.

The changes in Butte are immense. If you would have told someone in 1965 what Park Street would look like today, or that the Anaconda Company would be gone, they would never have believed you. It is a major feat that things have gotten done. Butte developed a sense of going forward despite the adversities that were in place. And methods and habits developed then have carried us through the shutdown. Now it's a matter of these chickens coming home to roost. Examples are things like the Port of Butte, taking advantage of the Union Pacific through the grain terminal, now it looks like Butte will be a major lumber transloading site, I-15 is finally complete. The seeds for all these projects were sown back in Model Cities.

Q: Jim Murphy, Don Peoples, Micone -- who were some of the other major players? For instance, on the Federal level we would look to Mike Mansfield and Arnold Olson . . .

You might get some debate about Mike Mansfield. Many felt he could have done more in helping the community to settle strikes. He was a great influence with ACM, and some people feel he abandoned Butte in 1959, that the long strike could have been settled sooner if he had pressured the Company. The miners went out for a nickel and came back for a penny. The Company didn't want to settle the strike; copper was down. Mansfield was very involved with I -15. He and Olson were involved with Model Cities.

Q: From everything I've been able to garner so far, Model Cities was a very clean program. If that you sense of it?

Yes. that's not to say that politics were not involved, that some people didn't get some extra help for giving help in another way. But it was very clean -- they knew that if they screwed up, they'd lose everything.

Q: Can you tell me how Powers and Micone operated, how they were different.

Micone was headstrong, demanding. He ran a bsically open government, at least on the surface. He was not a crook financially -- Rick is sure he never made anything for himself while he was in office -- but he had strong opinions, he was forceful. He and Maurice Hennessey battled; Mike manipulated the council. The city government here has always seemed to have a strong executive and a weaker legislative branch.

Q: Was Powers clean?

Rick says he was, to the best of his knowledge.

There was widespread tolerance to vice in Butte, but there was human misery associated with it too, especially in hard times. That comes from its history -- in the early part of the Century, it was a mining camp, mostly single men. When there were more families here, the tolerance for vice lessened. That's probably what fostered PACE [a group of citizens, Promotoe Active Community Effort, founded in 1967.] Rick doesn't know if the reform movement had that much effect.

Q: What do you think are the telling events if I'm to understand how Butte works?

Strikes, the consolidation fights, the shutdowns and closures, Model Cities and the communitiy organization structure. The Metro Sewer fight was probably not that significant in the overall lay of things.

But the whole history of this community is the Company and community acquiescence to it.

The community has needed the Democrats on the national scene who fought for it -- Mansfield, Olson, Baucus, Williams, etc. And we can't forget Dick Shoup, who was a Republican. Butte didn't suffer under Shoup. There was a sense among politicans nationally that Butte needed help. But many of the major players are people whose names are not known, people in the Regional offices in Denver, middle and upper leavel bureaucrats. Murphy, Peoples, etc fostered personal relationships with these people, and they made a difference for Butte. Butte is the sort of place that you either like or you hate. A lot of bureaucrats came here and liked it for its history, etc. Butte politicians made friends -- it's that Butte personality, and they exploited it to the hilt.

In the governement, people like Tom Powers, Micone, Peoples, Tom Cash, Judie Tilman, played a role. And also there were a lot of Federal Bureaucrats who these people knew, and who helped.

The program was clean. Foote couldn't find any misappropriations of funds

As far as Rick could determine, it was very clean.

Q: And you looked.

Yes, I looked. And I'm usually good at uncovering these things.

Q: How did it happen that the program was clean? That certainly wasn't Butte's reputation up to that point.

There were smart people administering the program. And they knew that one screw up and they'd lose everything. They were clean. Don Peoples fired his best friend from a job because he put excess oil in front of his house.

Q: Changing subjects -- what about the unions here. Some people express a lot of anger about labor in Butte. Did the unions screw up here?

No more here than elsewhere. They failed to see deindustrialization of the Company.

Q: If they had seen it, what could they have done?

Who knows? Pressed for more trade restrictions; negotiated contracts with retraining instead of more wages; earlier retirements with better pensions so more jobs would open up; funded research into better ways to performance; lost workforce through attrition rather than by lay offs. There was a lack of foresight there.

Q: What about the Hanging 5 restaurant imbroglio? What does that show about Butte?

Rick thinks it is not significant. Both sides backed themselves into a corner, but it probably doesn't have larger significance. He thinks that people are fed up with with unions, that they think they have no value. Companies are better able to get their message across of the need for profitability, and they are more humane, more able to deal directly with their employees. If you can resolve a grievance one on one, without going through the union and taking months, why should you involve the union?

Q: What are labor relations like at MRI? What's going on up there?

Rick has heard that only two people have quit since July. Part of that is that they are glad to be working again. And part has to be because they like it; they want the company to be profitable. If they were unhappy, they would organize. There seems to be no bent toward it, which seems to indicate that they are not that unhappy.

Q: Of course, some people say that those hired were screened so as not to want a union . . .

They were screened -- there was no secret about that. There is some anger about that, but that comes from people who weren't hired. And somewhere down the road, Rick is sure, there will be a movement to organize MRI. Whether or not it will be successful is another question.

One real problem with ACM was the jurisdictional problem with 13 unions. People would have to wait around for someone from another union to come and move a pipe or whatever. The workers didn't like that any better than management.

Q: And management was way heavy, too.

Yes, before the pit shut down, it was said that there were three workers to every boss. It was overloaded on both labor and management sides. Unworkable.

Q: What can you tell me about how Don Peoples operates?

He works hard, long hours, and gets the maximum from the people who work for him. He is strict, honest. He keeps power unto himself, plays things very close to his vest. When he delegates, sometimes it gets him into problems. He is a good motivator, and he is honorable Everything he does, he does for the good of the community.

Q: As an example of how he operates, how did he get mining in Butte again?

Maybe nobody knows. And perhaps the question is not what Peoples did, but ARCO's strong desire to get rid of as much as possible here. It's not very clear how that happened. They looked for a way to get this rolling. Rick remembers that at the time of the shutdown his city editor predicted that the Company would reopen again as soon as the contract expired.

Q: You certainly hear on the street the rumour that ARCO is still involved. Is that your sense?

Rick has heard that; thinks probably that ARCO isn't, that they were so glad to just get ride of it.

Going back to Peoples, he uses advistory committees, and has a very sophisticated knowledge of the Federal Governement. He uses those tools effectively to promote Butte. The business incubator is an example of that; his grantsmanship; monies under EDA.

Q: In the total picture of Butte's turnaround, how significant a roll does Don Peoples play?

A significant one. He played a significant role in getting MRI going again -- how he played that role, Rick doesn't know. He plays a big role in transportation --he's on top of that; he has a good working relationship with the Montana Department of Commerce. He has a broad range of contact in the community to get information. He's willing to take chances. For instance, with this computer industry thing -- he fought for a resolution on revenue bonds, even knowing he would probably lose. He was willing to spend some political capital on that.

Evan Barrett, head of the Local Development Corporation, would be good to talk with. He was a former staff member for Melcher, former head of the Democratic Party, worked with Forrest Anderson and Tom Judge. Good at identifying ideas, pushing for them, and if they don't work, changing horses and finding something that does work.

Q: So how is Butte doing?

Better than it was. As good as it could? Rick doesn't know. There is still unemployment, outmigration. We need basic industry; we can still improve the transportation situation; need more retail. But there is a sense of optimism here, based on the mining, and the seeming diversification of the economic base.

There was always the rumour that the company wouldn't let industry come in. And Rick thinks that was probably the case. But he can't prove it. But then, too, there was the issue of the town -- what a dump it was! Rough, tough, no place for corporate executives to locate. It wasn't a nice, midwestern town. It certainly wasn't Ohio. No trees. It looked and acted as a mining camp. The 1890's sensibilities lasted into the 1960's. There was never a line of industrialists knocking on the door, wanting to get into Butte.

Q: Do you know anything about the Prudential Diversified Services situation? A lot of people lost money to that.

Rick doesn't know much about it. It was an investment scheme, probably a pyramid scheme, a Ponsi scheme -- taking new investor's money to pay off earlier investors. Rick thinks it was in the '60's. Probably not important in the overall scheme of things.

Q: How about gun running to Ireland in the 70's?

There was nothing to it. As Rick remembers, one gun reported stolen in Butte wound up on a dock in England. There was nothing much to it. Dave Walters might know about it.

Q: How important do you think the Urban Revitalization Agency has been to Butte turnaround?

Significant, big time! People come to look at Butte now -- and especially if they were were a few years ago, and they see a significant difference, in the physical appearance, and also in the mental attitude.

Rick thinks that the statue, Our Lady of the rockies, was a turning point in the phsychological makeup of Butte. People realized they could get things done. Also, the skating rink is definitely a turning point. And it's signficant for the future, a real indication that the community is not going to fold up its tent.

Look at the Federal programs here -- they worked just like they were supposed to be. What would Butte be like without them? Very small -- without hope. Anaconda (the town) had Federal money, too. But it didn't have the highway going through, and it didn't have the ability at the time for primary production.

Q: Montana Power has played an important role, too.

Yes. They were the single most important factor in the tax increment district -- where money comes from increased revenue uptown. And all that meant money for the Uptown.

Q: Why do you think they'd stayed Uptown when everyone else was leaving?

There was that sense of loaylty to Butte and to the Uptown. At one time, there was a great fear that they would relocate in Bozeman. MPC can take a lot of responsiblity for the turnaround of the Uptown and the attitude in the community. ACM decreased in power and importance. If Montana Power was to stay, it had to make Butte attractive enough to get done what it wanted to do, to attract the talent it needed. Also, there were all the Butte loyalists in the Company, Joe McIlwain, the Corettes, Paul Schmechel, Jim Murphy. It if hadn't been for MPC, we'd be up shit creek. And they didn't just stay, but got larger -- Entech, Western Energy, etc. It's been a MAJOR factor. Jim Murphy, VP of Western Energy, is the same Jim Murphy that headed Model Cities.

Murphy went from Model Cities to the Hopspital to the Power Company. Important person to talk with.

MPC made a decision somewhere along the line whether it was going to be a heavy handed corporate citizen or a good one, and coincidentally, it had to decide whether or not it would diversify into nuclear energy. It decided to be a good citizen, and

decided to go through with Colstrip, not go into nuclear. Colstrip was the most extensive litigation in Monana's history. There were some decisions at the PSC that damn near sunk it, but it survived. Now, the Company is glad that it's a good corporate citizen, and glad that it's not nuclear. And it's been a leaders. Technology at Colstrip to meet the Class I air pollution standards has been landmark. Also, Company developed technical methods for wielding power over lines that is very important.

And Rick thinks it may have been a landmark when the Power Co went with a non-union firm, Haynes, to put in the pipeline. There was a lot of controversy, and violence, but perhaps not as bad as might have been expected. Perhaps that was the first indication that the unions were not as powerful as people thought. Haynes did not have the expertise to get the job done, and it was a mistake to hire them. But, the pipeline got into the ground despite some of the strongest union opposition. That didn't help MPC's image in the short term, though.

Rick thinks that sympathies for MPC turned around when the PSC denied putting Colstrip 3 and 4 into the rate base. That made people realize that there really was an anti-business bent here. When Montana saw in the Wall Street Journal what the financial markets in New York thought about that decision, they realized the significant impact that would have on business here. It was a landmark turning point.

The Power Company is doing something in Brazil -- Rick doesn't know much about it, but expectes that it will have an impact for Butte, will mean more jobs here, more white collar jobs.

Q: Why did it take so long to get I - 15 through Butte? It was OK'd by Congress in the mid-60's.

There was opposition from other parts of the state. There were environmental concerns about bringing it down through Boulder Canyon, tho those were eventually overcome because there had already been environmental damage with the railroad and mining. And, Rick thinks, it had to do with the general Anti-Butte attitude around teh state.

Q: what turned it around so that we have the Interstate now?

The petition of 17,000 signatures in 1973 or so was important. The legislative delegation was helpful. And, that had been the original plan in Washington.

Q: Who were the key players?

Tom Judge; Harp Cote or Rod Cooney were on the Highway Commission; the Butte delegation, George Schotte. He is retired now; he was a car dealer, on the highway commission, always very involved with road transportation.

Q: What haven't we talked about that's important to understand how Butte works?

The demise of Catholic education, and it's slow comeback. That's a trait ingrained in the community forever. Most of the movers and shakers in the community went through that system -- Murphy, Peoples, Powers. They were products of the Catholic education system. That had a significant impact. They had learned how to pull things off. If you could get around the nuns, you could get around anyone.

Education is a topic of signficant controversy in this community forever. But the Butte education system has turned out good minds. The political structure of the school system is screwy -- so the teachers have to be doubly tenatious to do such a good job.

The breaking up of neighborhoods is usually seen in a negative light, and it did destroy the ethnic communities. But in terms of diversifying the community, in breaking through some of the solidified ways of thinking, perhaps it allowed the community to move forward.

Another important thing -- the decision of the voters to go for non partisan has got Rick baffled. The democrats were complacent enough they they lost the ability to judge people, and that is astounding. Would have thought that the Democratic Central Committee would be more astute. And it barely passed -- by only 25 or 27 votes. But close only counts in horsehoes and hand granades. If any year is a landmark one, it is 1986, when Butte went non - partisan, and mining started up non-union.

Don Ulrich had always run as an independent and been elected. And Ricky Griffith, Pat Williams brother in law, helped. They had a very keen assessment of the community, and it worked. The Democrats didn't see it coming, didn't take it seriously. And now that it's passed, it will be damn hard to change it back.

Q: Do you think that will change the community in concrete ways?

You won't see the Democratic party disappear; you will still see a strong Democratic Central Committee backing of candidates. But you will no longer see the Democrats just win.

Micone ran first as an Independent, later as a Dem. So the seeds of discontent with the Democrats were there very early. PACE was indiciative of that. When you

translate this onto the state or national scene, it falls apart. But on the local level, there is the potential there for diversified political structure as well as a diversified economic struction.

Another important factor is the increased historic awareness. Ethnic dinners, mural, etc. There is more awareness of that now than there was. And Ristene Hall [with the Exerdance Building] has made a real difference -- there's someone who has just done it on hard work alone, sheer work and enthusiasm. Much of this has helped to raise the awareness of what the community is about. Before, as the neighborhoods were being lost to the pit, there was a sinking feeling in the pit of the stomach, but not much awareness that other things could be done, or outrage.

The ACM shutdown was good for Butte. The sense of domination lifted with the shutdown. There was almost a sigh of relief as well as a sign of shock with the shutodwn.

Another important factor in Butte is the paper. Since1959 when the Anaconda Company sold the newspapers, there has not been much good news to report through the end of the 1970's. There were layoffs, shutdowns, strikes, adveristy, threats against the highway, against Montana Tech. Every roadblock that could be thrown at this community was, and we were charged with reporting these things. It was depressing, not a pleasant task. Yet, by reporting those things, by not glossing them over, we were able to maintain sufficient credibility that now that we can report positive things, our crediblity is such that it has more impact than if we had tried to ignore what was going on in the '70's. It is important to a community to have a strong press that reports the bad as well as the good -- even though it meant, at the time, losing advertisers, and receiving some community hostility.

If a community has any viability, it has to withstand adversity -- and in order to do that, it has to know about it.

The Standard reported every Federal dime. You have to have the ability to report the bad if you are going to be believed when you report the good.

Q: This seems especially applicable since when the ACM owned the paper it didn't report anything on the local level -- Afghanistaning.

Yes.

Back to Model Cities -- when Butte was going after Federal money, putting the bureaucracy that it needed together, other towns were laughing at us and didn't develop the expertise. Now, the money is drying up and it takes a sharper edge to

get it than it did before. Others can't avail themselves of federal money that's left because they don't know why. There's the sense that if there is a dollar available, Butte will be able to pick it up.

George McCarthy in Washington, D.C., with Dave Brown -- McCarthy & Brown, lobbyists. Butte supporters. Sargent Shriver is on the Board of MHD. These contacts are made. Anybody anywhere who is from Butte will not turn down Butte-ites. There are very bright people, and they share their expertise with the community.

Butte people are special. [Bert] Gasgill [former editor of the Standard] sent Foote to Annapolis on a Navy junkett -- a bunch of educators. Foote sat next to a Priest from Central, Bob O'Donnell, Foote thinks. Foote said, "I'll bet you we will run into somebody from Butte." The priest didn't think so. But the second night there, in a bar, ran into someone whose father was from Butte. Butte was a population center, and it supported so many people.

Stan Kemmit, Secretary of the US Senate, was helpful. Monanhan went to Kemmit to get the helicopter to put the Statue up on the hill -- did it "because his mother begged him to."

The head of the laborers union in San Francisco was a man named Evankovich from Butte. Butte men would go out there, he'd get them on. Mobsters shot him in the head twice a few years ago, he survived. That Butte toughness.

It's important to stress that Butte is not "Western." It is metropolitan, and it never lost that mentality.

Montanans resent Butte for the way Butte gets it done.

There is a spirit of generosity here -- you are helped here. And that is self perpetuating.

Q: Butte is changing, though. It's no longer a labor, blue collar, democrat town in the way it had been in the past. How do you maintain that spirit?

Yes, there was togetherness. And on the other hand, it was a tough town to break into. That was exacerbated when the neighborhoods were gone. As a melting pot, in the early years, you settled into your ethnic neighborhood so you were brought into the fabric of the community very quickly. Now that's not the case. The first question you are asked is "Are you from Butte." There's a sense of us against them.

Q: That's true. And yet, in a way, with all the changes, it's surprising that there isn't more of that.

The main occupation here for a century has been trying to overcome adversity -- and that supercedes class, ethnic background. If Butte ever entered sustained prosperity, you'd see temendous changes in the social fabric and the ability to hold together. Compare Butte to Billings since WWII. Butte has had a steady decline in jobs, population, prestige. Billings has been on the rise. Probably it didn't have a strong sense of community to begin with. It hasn't developed it.

That tremendous need to survive economically has been the backbone of Butte. Now, the question is, can Butte survive without economic adversity?

You have seen the amalgamation of effort toward Butte's future only in the last 15 or 20 years. Before that, a lot of energy was dissipated into the neighborhoods.

Q: That makes sense, and yet it is counter-intuitional. You would think that when the neighborhoods were destroyed, the sense of community would be as well.

You need to take into account also that this was a one company town and that unified it. You may be English or Irish or from one parish rather than another and fight in the back lots. But on strike, you were together. And when the company was gone, that energy was still there. We have had to focus it to survive.