THE VERDIGRIS PROJECT

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JIM KEANE

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Oral History Transcript of Jim Keane

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Crain: We are sitting here today with the honorable Jim Keane. And Jim, I'd like you to tell me first about your childhood.

Keane: Well, my life. If I was three people, I couldn't have had a better life. I mean, it really. And growing up in Butte is all part of that. And in my childhood, I was raised down on Farrell Street. 1100 block on Farrell Street, which is St. Joe's Parish, Monroe Parish. And I lived next to my grandfather and grandmother who came from Ireland on my mother's side. And we lived in the house next door to them when I was growing up. I was born in 1941, in December, just as the Second World War just started. And to grow up in Butte as a kid, and specifically in that area, which sits between the two railroad tracks, the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific at the time. I mean, I can't tell you for a child growing up that it was a better place.

If you talk about independence and freedom and you would never raise your own children like this because we were allowed to do anything we wanted until the arc lights went on at nine o'clock. When the arc lights went on, you had to go home, but up until that time. You'd think there was no television. Radio was new. And they didn't want you in the house. So summer and winter you were on the street and creating whatever you wanted to do that was fun. And part of that was, discipline in that era was the neighbors disciplined the children, too. So if they were too rambunctious, the neighbor would and there would be no comeback from the parents. I mean, we were out, and frankly, we just had a great time in our neighborhood. There were hills we could sleigh ride down in the wintertime. In the summer, we lived across from the ballpark.

Crain: What ballpark?

Keane: Hebgen ballpark was right across the street. It's Second, Emma Street, First Street, right between the two railroad tracks. A lot of the workers either worked on the street cars or either one of the railroads. And then the miners were there, too.

Crain: What did your mom and dad do?

Keane: My dad worked for the highway department.

Crain: And what was his occupation? What was his occupation with the highway?

Keane: He was the office manager, but he died when I was six years old. And my sister was four. My brother was nine. So my mother then became a school teacher. And that's the job she had prior to when they got married. But one of the things that for school teachers, once they got married, the women school teachers had to quit their jobs in those days. My mother was a charter member of the teachers' union in Butte for the very fact that her and her sister were both schoolteachers and they had a contract. And when they went to work, things were pretty tough.

And so what the school board did, it said, well, there's two of you teaching, so we'll just pay each of you half. And they thought that was kinda unfair. And so they organized a Butte teachers' union. That was prior to my time, prior to me being born.

Crain: Pretty impressive woman, your mother. First bargaining unit.

Keane: First bargaining units. In the country, it was the first scheduled contract where they actually had a salary schedule. And I ended up becoming a businessman. This is years later, though, the operating engineers and how they got the contract . . . my sister has done a lot of research. I think you're well aware of that. But when they were coming to the contract, my mother was the first person and the building and trades said they'd help her get a contract. And the way they actually got the contract was the operating engineers who were the engineers in the school system said to them, "Hey, those young gals want to get a union contract." And the way it happened was the head of the operating engineers said, "Well, if you don't give those . . ." And they argued that they weren't going to give them the contract. And he said, "Well, it's December. And if those gals don't get a contract, you're not going to have any heat in the schools Monday morning. So make up your mind what you want to do." So they got their contract. So that's your story.

But as far as a kid growing up, I mean, there was the old icehouse on the Great Northern. We played there. One of our great games there was, a Shriner's warehouse was near the thing, and they had big furniture boxes. And Jim Ugrin, lifelong friend of mine, wanted to make sure he told us if we'd get those big furniture boxes and we'd take them to what we called the diggings, which was an old area of mining in our area. There was I think during war years, there was an area right in there also that was mined. We'd take those big boxes and we'd get a guy in there or two guys in one and then we'd light the other end on fire. It was who could stay in the box the longest. So, I mean, that was one of the games. The other . . . the Green Mountain mine . . . we tore the end off so we could get down there.

And why we wanted to do that was just to do something so that we climbed down there to the water level. They had a drift and we'd have flashlights and we'd try to walk in that old drift. One of our other favorite pastimes is if you go down today just on Atlantic Street there, there's a sewer cover. And if you take that sewer cover off, you can climb in there. Then you could walk from there in the sewer up to the Silver Bow homes. So that was just for something to do. And the only problem one time we were in there and there was a big rainstorm. So by the time we got back to where we could get out, we were up to our waists in water.

Crain: Could you swim?

Keane: No, not then. I learned to swim later, but. So, you were free reign to play the games. You know, all kids had their games, I think, around the community. Kick the can. But you were free to do whatever you want. And we lived near the railroad. So there were always things to play around the trains. I think if your parents knew half of the stuff you did . . . We became experts as our own children grew up of what they shouldn't do, because we had done it all in our lifetime because we were free to create any crazy thing out there that we wanted to do.

Crain: So when did you first play with dynamite?

Keane: Frankly, dynamite wasn't for . . . it was later in my life that I learned to love dynamite, and at the time there was plenty of it around. I started liking dynamite . . . once you were mining. Once you went into the mines . . . Leo Ugrin, cases of dynamite came out of there. In fact, I should bring up the picture. I have a picture of my son, Kevin and I. And since Dolores is from Northern Ireland, my wife. I took this picture to specifically give it to my relatives, because in Northern Ireland, if you have a spent cartridge case in your house, you can go to prison for that. So I took a picture of my son and he's blowing a bubble and he's got sticks of dynamite in his pockets and he's holding two sticks of dynamite. And then he has a fuse wrapped around his neck. I was very comfortable with that. But I wanted to show my relatives that we have a different philosophy here in town. But dynamite . . .You can dig ditches with it. And around Butte dynamite was really easy to get. What made you think of that?

Crain: Because 90 percent of the men that I talked to will tell a story about when they first played with dynamite. Where they got it. What they blew up.

Keane: 4th of July of our neighborhood was one of our great, great things. The fireworks you could buy then - M80's and all those other great things. And we used to get maybe five of us or six of us. We all had paper routes, we all had money. And so you'd order these big, huge sets and you'd try to get the noise set. And what we used to do is we would take those big two shot repeaters and we'd see somebody walking down the street and then you'd kinda angle it and light it off and shoot it and watch them drop to their knees. So one of my favorite stories, my brother took a big thing and he filled it full of powder.

He broke all this stuff up and filled this thing full of powder. He thought he was going to build a fountain. Well, it didn't go off. And he looked in there and at about that time the thing flared up and it just flared up and his face was all black, burnt the hair off of him. And he wore glasses and he jumped on his bike and he was riding down the street, "I'm blind! I'm blind!" And then he took his glasses off, "Oh, I'm not blind." But yes, fireworks were very, very big at the Fourth of July and they might as well have been dynamite. You'd blow the mailboxes up. You'd take them and put them in newspapers on people's porch and light that on the thing.

And there were so many great things about growing up. One of our favorites in that neighborhood, you had the Bridgeway Drive-In. So you'd say I'd go to my mother and say, well, I'm sleeping at Ugrin’s. Ugrin’s would go to their mother, "I'm sleeping at Keane's." And then we'd all just take sleeping bags. And the front row of the Bridgeway Drive-in just had people.

Crain: Where was the Bridgeway Drive-in?

Keane: Bridgeway Drive-in was located just on the other side of the creek just kind of in the Parrot tailings down there. It isn't there anymore. And it was very close. You'd just walk down there. And the whole row would be kids in sleeping bags and the people never . . . And you would just take the speaker and set it down and we'd be there until like 3:00 in the morning and then we'd go back and crawl into somebody's window and go to sleep. Nobody would ever know that you. We spent many nights at the Bridgeway Drive-in theater. That was another. Soon as the

movies started at the Bridgeway in the summer, kids were down there in sleeping bags. And you'd watch it right till the end. And it got over real late. So the last movie, I don't know, it was two in the morning. And then a lot of times we'd just go back. I had a morning paper route and my brother had the evening paper route. If anybody's talked about the paper routes, I mean, that was another place for young people between the paper routes and the sellers. It's down where the Irish Times. That's where the Montana standard was. And if you go down that alley, which is all the prostitutes were there and every kid would have to pick their evening papers up there. So. And every parent knew where they were going to get their papers. But you'd be in there and I went with my brother when he first got his paper route and we thought we got there real early.

Crain: So how old?

[00:15:18]

Keane: How old was I? I was probably in maybe the third or fourth grade. The worst guy I ever worked for was my brother. He wanted me to do all the work for him and he'd collect the money.

Crain: Was he older than you?

Keane: He is three years older than I. So we went there real early and he's got this route. And so we get there real early. And we're going to be first in line to get the papers to do a good job. So as we were in this area, it's all paper boys. And then they came and they said, "Well, I don't care if you got here early. You're not first." They just pushed us. So we ended up at the end of the line because everybody else . . . and if you wanted to end up first, you had to fight your way to the front of the line. So I got my own paper route. A morning route. And from about Utah Street all the way over to 2nd Street. That was my morning route. But you picked your morning papers, which I thought was great, at the NP Depot. They'd just delivered there and then you just picked your papers up.

So there was no fighting to get your papers. So my brother, I think he had the paper route up to when he was in . . . I was in maybe sixth grade when he still had the paper route. And somehow he was in high school like a freshman and he got detained. So he says, "Could you pick my papers up?" So I went up there after school to get the night thing. And I wasn't going to do the fighting deal to get in there. So I'm just sitting on the bench. They had a big bench where you could fold your papers. And I'm sitting there and they said, "What route do you have?" And I said, "Well, I'm here to pick up 38." And they kind of looked at me and they said, "Oh, you're first in line." So over that period of time, my brother had fought his way. And I used to watch what he would do. He had the paper bags. You remember the old paper bags? Well, my brother's paper bag, he took it and he sewed buckshot. So his whole thing when he put it over his shoulder, it had buckshot in it.

Crain: So if he swung that.

Keane: I mean it literally. And then they had the sellers. They came in, they had their own deal, but they came in after the routes got there. Then they'd have the sellers that came up on the corners. In each corner, they were doing the same thing to get Park and Main. I mean you had to

be number one to have the Park and Main corner. Then everybody was always envious [of one of the Badovinac brothers] He had all the houses of ill repute. And everybody was always jealous of him because he got the best tips because that was part of his route. So everybody was jealous of that route because . . . and I always wondered because every kid just walked through the alley there everyday to get his paper. My mother never said anything. And when you think back on it, they weren't afraid that you were going to get harmed.

Crain: Or corrupted.

Keane: Or corrupted or anything like that. I mean, I think the freest I ever was was when I was a kid. I really do. I mean, it was just a life that you wished everybody could live. But then when you look back on a lot of the things you did. Oh, some of it was very hair raising.

Crain: Yeah. Danger. So you went to Saint Joe's?

Keane: Went to Saint Joe's. The other thing we used to do . . . I always tell my kids and grandkids and they look at you like you got holes in your head. But we used to walk back and forth every day and we'd actually walk home for lunch. It's probably three quarters of a mile from where we lived to St. Joe's. And then we'd pass Monroe. There was a certain amount of tension between Monroe and St. Joe's. Competitive. And so there's a certain amount of tension between schools. But St. Joe's, you had your neighborhood crew which was both St. Joe's and Monroe. And then you had your school crew, which was in school. And my best friends, both of whom passed away, were the Scoobis [?] twins.

And frankly, I got in more trouble with the Scoobis twins. That was a whole other area of the time you spent in school creating things. And the other thing, what I used to do, too, is on Sunday, I was always in trouble for this. On Sunday I had my paper route, but on Sunday I got extra papers and I would sell them in front of the church. And a lot of the churches had that. And man, it was great money. I mean, it was for a kid, it was just extra money. You just stood there. People came out and bought the paper from you that didn't have it on the route. But what I would do is go up in each mass, I would just sleep up in the choir loft. And then you'd forget, I mean, sometimes you're pretty tired. Maybe you had been at the Bridgeway the night before, and were in late. You had your morning route, so you needed to get some sleep sometimes. So you'd be sleeping up there. And I was sleeping there one day and the nun came up. "You're always up here! The 11:00 mass. Have you gone to mass yet?" "Well, yeah, I was there at the 8:00. I was there at the 9:30. I am here at the 11:00. You know, I'm here at every mass."

Crain: But you weren't paying attention.

Keane: I wasn't really paying attention. And I had to leave early to get out there to make sure you got the people who left early from church to make sure you got them. You were out there right after communion because, you know, it's like today, you're going to have the early people leaving, including me now. But you don't see any of those people. But every church had its sellers. I had St. Joe's locked up.

Crain: Did you serve as an altar boy?

Keane: Served as an altar boy that was. Yes. Served as an altar boy, served in the choir. And those were all your kind of school friends. So, yeah, I served as an altar boy, but I was always in trouble because I was always trying to get out at Sunday Mass, to get out of there. I mean, I didn't want to serve as an altar boy on Sunday because . . .

Crain: Well, it interfered with your economics?

Keane: Yeah, yeah. So that was it. I'm trying to think of some other stuff. But I can't tell you how fun it was to grow up here. I mean, it just was something else.

Crain: Well, I know that you grew up in that time where kids really didn't have to report. Yeah. Get out. Don't come back till it's dark. Don't be late for dinner.

Keane: And you ate dinner and they didn't want you in the house after dinner. And you didn't want to be in the house after dinner.

Crain: Oh, God, no, you'd be doing the dishes.

Keane: No. I mean, they wanted you gone. And you were gone. And the other part of it, it's like I said, the discipline was neighborhood wide. I mean, any parent in the neighborhood saw any other kid doing something they didn't like. They weren't immune to giving you a whack and you never went and told, went and complained to your parents that somebody hit you. And I think the other thing that developed out of that was a fierce loyalty and trust in all those people you grew up with. That you grew to trust the friends you had and they trusted you. Because you never would.

Crain: No tattling.

Keane: No tattling. When you did something. And you know, the railroad was . . . later on when I went to high school, I went to St. Joe's with John Gillespie, but he lived in the boulevard area. That's where the Keane side of my family grew up, in the boulevard area. Mike Keane was a carpenter, came to build a roller coaster. He came from Falls River, Massachusetts. And my sister loves this story. That he's out here and there's tons of work and everything's great. So he just called up and says . . . or not called, sent a telegram back, "Mag, load the kids up and come to Butte." My sister says, here she's stuck with the two kids riding the train to Butte and in diapers. And now just here we are. And so they lived in the boulevard and they had a house. It's right where the interstate is. The interstate went through their house. He built the house and he built several houses down there.

Crain: And he worked for the Anaconda Company?

Keane: He worked for the Anaconda Company. And I have a check from New Butte Mining Company that he had. My sister picked it up over in Livingston. And then he worked as a carpenter. And I remember as a young kid, he had two fingers. You see the commercials on John Tester? Well, my grandfather had two fingers cut off of one hand and three fingers cut off the

other. And when I was a kid, you know, the stumps fascinated me. So I would feel and I said, "Did that hurt? Did that hurt?" And my grandfather . . . I must have been five, but I'd never forgotten. He says, "You don't feel a thing. You see the blood fly and the finger's gone." So because frame and timber, they use those big open saws. There's one up there in the carpenter shop, but they were big, huge open shop where they have to cut that, you know, they have the notches at the tops of the post caps and girders for the timber. And those big saws if something hooked on it or something. But I can see his hands right there today with those . . . just like Tester. So he built houses. He said "Oh well, we'll get a few sticks of wood. We'll throw a house up." But that was their attitude. Just nothing got in their way.

Crain: They were pretty remarkable people.

Keane: Oh yeah. And that's the generation before what they call the greatest generation, which is part of what I would call your father in that generation.

Crain: Yeah. Really amazing. So both of your grandparents came from Ireland.

Keane: Both of my grandparents. Joe Thomas came from Donegal. And his wife Katie came from Roscommon in Central Ireland. And the Keane's both came from just outside of Waterford. My grandfather, Keane, came from Portlaw, which is about four miles outside of Waterford. And my grandmother, they met in Falls River, Massachusetts. But she was born just about two miles from Portlaw. They never knew each other. And the Keane family, my grandfather, Mike Keane, they immigrated from Portlaw as a family, which was highly unusual for the whole family. But as we went over there, Portlaw is a mill town and the Quakers in Ireland ran the mills. But what was fascinating to me in Ireland was the Quaker part, those mill people. They actually had health care and a retirement and housing. So the Quakers were very far ahead of their time, because the town was literally built to supply the mill. If you go there today, the streets are all organized.

The houses are all built the same. And if you look at the history of the Quakers and in and in Portlaw . . . They got into a family dispute. And actually the Quaker family. And then what happened was, is I think they helped their families that were left there immigrate because that's where my Keane side went. And my grandfather was just a young kid. They immigrated to Falls River, Massachusetts. Where did they go to? Another mill. And that's where he became a millwright or carpenter.

Crain: Was that before or after the famine? Was that at the time of the famine?

Keane: I think that would have been after the famine. And there were places like some of the mill towns which were making money, they actually survived through the famine, just like the North survived better because they have more industry up there. And to me the fascination between Butte and Ireland, like the Beara Peninsula supplied everything.

But what fascinates me, so if you take a look at Clark and Daley, they both came from the north. I mean, Daley grew up there. He came from County Cavin. Clark was born in America, but the family came from County Tyrone. One was a Catholic, one was a Presbyterian. Both from Northern Ireland. So in my opinion, part of the fight between the two of them was the Northern

Ireland fight, because they were from the different religions. Now you're looking like you disagree with that.

Crain: No, I think it's an interesting thought. That's an interesting thought. I never thought about that. Yeah, that's an old fight.

Keane: That's a six hundred year fight.

Crain: Yeah. That's a very interesting thought. And I've never thought about it in that terms. So I think that. Yeah. Interesting.

Keane: They're both businessmen. They're both here in Butte, making tons of money and they can't figure it out between them. Why? Because they were in the 600 year fight.

Crain: Yeah. And that's not over. It'll never get over.

Keane: That's going to continue. So they both had the northern connection and they both had the different faiths. It's like my brother in law, when we were in Northern Ireland. I married in the 70s and that's a whole other story. But we went back in the middle of the fight. And we're sitting there in my brother in law's house. And all of a sudden he jumps up and runs to the window. And I said, "What happened?" He said a different car went up the street. And I said, "We've been sitting here for two hours. You can tell me every car that went up the street?" He says, "Yeah, it's dead ended up there. What happens is the cars come up. And if I don't recognize the car going up, I got to take a look to make sure nobody's on the street because if they turn around at the end and they come out and they'll shoot anybody that's on the street." So you have to make sure you know every car that goes up the street.

Crain: You know, that is such a powerful thought because, you know, in this country, we never lived with threats like that.

Keane: Well, the ironic part, I think before I went there and even after, you know, my connections with the north are through Dolores, my wife, and Philomena. She was the youngest of eleven children. And her dad was off working in England all the time. And the mother left to raise the eleven kids except he'd come home. And another friend of mine, Charlie Prologi's[?], favorite story is after about four children, this guy is coming and going. So she goes to the parish priest and complains to the parish priest that, "Geez, all these kids and I'm left home. My family's trying to help us out to survive." And so the parish priest's advice to Delores's mother was "Woman, go home and do your duty."

Crain: That would turn you from that fight pretty quick. So how did she survive, your mother-in-law?

Keane: My mother-in-law? Oh, Elizabeth was a great gal. She had a family and they had a farm over there. And it would help with food. But you know, I think Dolores would be a better person to ask. One of my favorite stories was. So anyway, Dolores came here and I'm 30 years old and living the good life in Butte and just enjoying myself. And it was great. The other part. We

should probably talk about all the work that was here then. I mean, if you were a good worker, you could tell the boss, you know, "Kiss my ass." And you'd be to work the next day. If you were a good worker, you could just . . .

Crain: So you went to work as a paper boy in the third or fourth grade. But what else did you do? Did you work in high school?

Keane: Well, what would happen to me is in high school, when I was a sophomore in high school, I got shot in the head in an accident at Christmas time. We were out getting Christmas trees with Jimmy Ogren and his dad, and John Gillespie. And we were sitting on a sleeted rock out there. And Johnny had a new high standard, nine shot .22. And you know how this winter, it sleets? Well, the rock was angled and icy and we'd put the cartridge case over there. And then we'd shoot five and four. One guy would shoot five. And so John shot his five. And it was going to be my turn and I'm sitting next to him. And your feet are kind of on this rock. And then he handed me the gun.

And when I reached for the gun, my feet slipped out from under me and I fell backwards and I pulled the gun. And he's holding the gun. And I pulled the gun. And I can remember, I can visualize this right today. Right. Every time I think of it. And I was looking right down the barrel of the gun. And I moved my head a little bit. The next thing I felt the back of my head was hurting. And so I jumped off the rock. And they thought I was kidding. So I'm running. And they're laughing, Jimmy and Gillispie. But I started running into trees. And then they became concerned. Then they caught up with me and grabbed me. And it's interesting. And I was yelling, "I've been shot." And so then when they got up to me, they took a look at me. And you remember the old Westerns where they say, "It's just a flesh wound." Well, there was no blood. And it was just a little thing. But it was right in the corner of my eye. And they looked at me and said, "Oh, it's just a flesh wound." And I'm thinking, "Oh, God, I'll go to the hospital and then we'll go to the show that night." But it was more than a flesh wound. Let's put it that way.

Crain: So, how long did it take you to recover from that?

Keane: I can remember going into the hospital on Continental Drive. Jimmy Ogren's dad was really shook up and he was driving, but we weren't that shook up because we left the other two kids out there to get the Christmas trees, the most important part. It's why we were out there. And so it was Gillespie and Jimmy Ogren's dad that took me to the hospital. And I was doing okay. And we came to Continental Drive, and he said, "You want to stop at this?" I said, "No, let's go to St. James." So we drove into St. James and Johnny ran into the hospital to get somebody. The old emergency room was down on the one side there. I got out of the car, but then I kind of started getting weak. Ogren's dad grabbed me and he was walking me down the hall and I can see Johnny is kind of half-jogging coming back with this nurse. It was Matt Kossack's wife, Agnes. Agnes Kossack. She's coming back. And she says, "Where's he shot?" And John said,"In the head." And she stopped dead in her tracks, looked over at him and said "What?" And he said, "In the head." And then they came up and Agnes looked at me and the last thing I remember, she said, "Put him on that table in that room." And it was about four or five days later that I woke up.

Crain: That's an incredible story.

Keane: So I've had a lucky life.

Crain: That's not the first big major incident in your life either.

Keane: No, no, no.

Crain: We can talk about those later. So in high school, you didn't work.

Keane: Well, actually, I kind of did. We were in wrestling. After I got shot, I went to the doctor and I said, "Can I play sports?" He said, "No, you're done. You're done playing sports." So then you go down and you're with the team, you're with these guys, especially wrestling. I liked wrestling. We were pretty good. So I go down there and I figured, "Why am I here? I'm going to be the manager." But then I thought, "Nah, I'm gonna go get a job. I got to do something else." After that, I did go hustle jobs. I worked for an insurance company. It was over on Broadway Street. I worked for an insurance company.

And this is no offense, but. So my job was to do the mail everyday. And so you go in and do the mail and there were about 25 women who worked there. And the thing that I learned from the insurance company, there were two sides. Half of the women were on one side and half of the women were [on the other side]. And I'm telling you, they did not get along. And I'm in doing the mail for everybody. But I had to learn to get along with everybody. So it was a good lesson in how to get along. So that insurance company was one of the most unique places I've ever worked.

Crain: You've never worked with 25 women?

[00:40:52]

Keane: Well, no. But yes, I have. But I learned to be very diplomatic. Let's put it this way. What are you getting for her? What did she do? Well, Oh, I don't know. She just gave me this mail. I

Crain: I'm just a mail boy.

Keane: Just the mail boy. So that was one of my first jobs in high school after my paper route. And then since my mother was single, you learn to fix everything and that has served me well all my life. I got into a lot of trouble in school, but one of the things that I could do, I remember at St. Joe's. There was a big steam leak. And the teachers got all shook and I said, "Well, we'll just go shut it off." And they had a big old boiler. "Can you do that?" "Yeah." So if you could do something like that, then they would cut you some slack. They might need you for some other plumbing issues. And people were very helpful as far as older people at that time, if you took any interest, they were very helpful. Jim Ogren's dad, he could be tough, but he did know a lot. And I mean, so, you learned from people around you and your neighbor across the street.

Crain: Where did you go to high school?

Keane: I went to Butte Central High School. And I graduated from the largest class ever to graduate from Butte Central High.

Crain: Did you go to Boys' Central?

Keane: Boys' Central. And that was another . . .

Crain: ``He takes a beating well."

Keane: Well, the brothers . . . in fact, I wrote a poem about the leather one time. And I got an 'A, A ++' for it. I can't remember it all. Let's see.
'L' is for the leather, the brothers' best friend.
'E' is for my poor old sore rear end.
'A' is for the assignment I didn't do.
'T' is for the times I've been too low (that didn't rhyme, too good.)

I can't remember the whole thing but it was good. I got AA ++. And you have your heroes in life like your dad and Tom McGree and Hank Bertoglio, all those people who all were of a generation and just all loved each other. Harp Cote. But Eddie Milan in my St. Joe's class is one of my all time heroes because we were in trouble. And it was Brother Roland's class and we were supposed to write "Silence is Golden" a thousand times. So there were about six of us. So the next day we came back and five of us had written "Silence is Golden" a thousand times. Eddie Milan looked him in the eye and said, "I'm not doing it." And he said, "All right, you're getting two shots on your hand and then we're gonna double it every day." And so he stands up there and I can see him to this day, he's put his hands up, "whack, whack." Two shots. So he comes back the next day and Milan says, "I didn't do it."

So he goes up, four shots. Now, four shots. Your hands start swelling up. And he never batted an eye. He looked him right in the eye and just held his hands out. So now four shots, we're all impressed. Comes back the next day. "I told you, I'm not doing it." Now it's four shots on each hand. His hands were practically bleeding. Four shots on each hand. And then what you would do is when you got hit, you'd grab the metal sides of that desk. That metal would cool off your hand. Well, we're all waiting and he comes in the next day. Now it's going to be 16 shots. He comes in. And everyone is betting that he did it. "I'm not doing it." Put his hands up again. And now his hands . . . they don't look the best from the day before. And brother Roland went up to him, hit him and he took the leather and threw it across the room and he said, “Alright. Alright. You win.” And the class erupted into the biggest, I mean, it was like stand up cheering. It was just amazing. So he's always been my hero.

The other thing is, you have those bonfires. Well, our class was one of the first classes to haul all the junk up to the M to create a bonfire. And somebody turned some of this in. And this is where the loyalty comes in. So the next Monday, we come to school right up to Brother O'Donnell's office. "You're part of the bonfire group. I want the names of people who were there." And I said, "Well, I couldn't see too good. It was dark." So he said, "Well, I just had Gillespie in here." Which he did because Gillespie, Johnny Gillespie was ahead of me. And he says, "Well, you might as well give me the names. Johnny gave me all the names." And right then I knew he's

lying to me. Because I knew Johnny didn't give him the names. So you walk out of there and then the next guy would go in. So finally there were like eight of us that he had taken in. So we knew the eight were got, right? Well, what the heck. I'm coming back and you're giving me names. So we knew the eight were there. So we all go back and give him the eight names.

Crain: So there were just eight of you. Smallest bonfire ever.

Keane: Yeah. There were about 100 people there. So the ironic part of the whole thing . . . We all had detention. "Who else was there?" "The fire was so bright, I couldn't see anybody else." And everybody came up with . . . But nobody told on anybody.

Crain: I think the punishment of that would be really great.

Keane: But somebody turned the eight of us in. So we had the bonfire. We had detention. Brother Roland is running detention class. And the detention room was on the third floor, and if you remember, the nurses were over in . . . One of the things at Central, you could check out the nurses over there in the nurses' dorms. So he said, "OK, the bonfire boys get the seats over by the window." So we thought, "Oh, we're getting a little extra good treatment here." The bonfire boys are over in the good row here.

Crain: How many days detention did you do?

Keane: Oh, about three weeks. The best one is Johnny Gillespie and I . . . Which priest was it? Father Kerrigan we had him for? And he had a, I can't remember, I think it was a Chevrolet and Father Kerrigan couldn't fix anything. So we'd go down and change the spark plugs on his car, just move them around, so it would run but not very well. So we did that. We waited about a week. Then we did it again. Then we waited a week and we did it again. By this time, he's really getting mad now. And the two of us, we're going to do it again. And we said, "Oh, we're going to get caught. If we do it again, we're gonna get caught."

And only the two of us knew. He had every spy. Everybody out there. Nobody knew who did it except the two of us. So pretty soon you're getting feedback. "Do you know anything about it?" "No. Don't know anything about it." But the two of us never told it. The other thing that we had. We had a chemistry lab for that period. We made chlorine. So we took the gas and we had the chlorine. It's heavy. So it'll stay in the bottle. So you just took this thing up there. And we're sitting right in front of him. And he used to sit kind of right off the side of his desk. So you'd sit there with this bottle of chlorine and if you tip it over and it would just kind of go "poosh." And blew it right up on him. And he started choking and gasping. And the rest of the class all know what's going on. But he thinks he's dying.

Crain: Sounds really miserable.

Keane: So he came in one day and all the shades are down. I can't remember. But if you look at the Butte Central, the windows, they had big, big open slatted windows. So we took a kid and shoved him out onto the ledge and shut the windows and locked all of the windows. So he's up on the second floor on the ledge. We pulled all the shades down and we were all sitting there. All

of the sudden he looks at us and says, "No. No, you didn't." And here's this shadow outside the shade walking by. The class went back to detention for that.
Crain: So when did you graduate high school?

Keane: Graduated in the class of Butte Central 1960. And the other thing you should mention, it was Boys' and Girls' Central. And I think the nuns hated the boys because we weren't allowed to go into Girls' Central. If you had a mixed study hall, it was always in Boys' Central. I think they didn't want the boys in that school at all. I mean, it was like Boys' and Girls' Central and it was a separation. And I can remember my tenth class reunion.

We were organizing my 10th class reunion, and the girls, like maybe eight girls and eight guys, all from the class of 1960. And while the girls were getting to organize, the boys are sitting there asking, “Who's that? Who's that?” And the girls are saying, "Who is that guy?" We all graduated together. But it was amazing to me and years later that you only really knew the people like that you dated with. I was amazed at how small and what a bad relationship that was years later. And you knew from your grade school that you came from. But that would be it. The other thing, the brothers, when you had the mixture, we had great card games with them. I mean we made some serious money playing cards with the brothers. It was really good.

Crain: I don't think they're supposed to teach you that. So when you graduated, what did you do?

Keane: I was so lucky when I graduated. The year 1960, Uncle Frank, Frank and Viola, my aunt and uncle, didn't have any children. And when I was young, after my father died, my mother would put me on the plane and those days they'd put you on a plane headed for California and the stewardesses would actually walk you to where you needed to get to. So I went down a couple times and stayed with my uncle and aunt, probably to give my mother relief in school. But before I get to that, in high school, I think one of the most other places . . . maybe a sophomore. And I guess you learn how to work. And one of the greatest places I worked was for Ole Ueland. And he had the contract to do all the Mount Haggin land.

Crain: So tell who Ole Ueland is and what that means.

Keane: Ole Ueland had ranched outside of Butte. And his wife was a Rademacher who owned a bunch of the property south of the interstate there. So the Ueland family. Another big family. In order to hay this ground, Mount Haggin ground, and his own ground. He had to hire a lot of people. And Ole Ueland was an admiral in the Second World War. And you talk about a guy who expected a day's work, but a real good guy. And I think if you take a look at a lot of the people like my neighbor, Skip Pagrega [?], worked as an engineer on the railroad. One minute you think he was mad at you, but he really liked you.

But Ole had all this property. And haying out there you worked seven days a week, sunup to sundown, a buck and a quarter an hour. And for me, my mother always throughout her life, in the days she was teaching, they were not given a check, like now the teachers get a check twelve months of the year. Well, my mother only made a nine month check. And this is the other thing about it. But Bob's Market down on Second Street ran credit for my mother all the time. We ate

steak every Thursday. It was kind of one of her deals and he would just charge up for the whole summer, then she'd start paying it off when she went back to work. So the year I went haying, so now I'm rolling in dough. But it's all this land. It ran from Anaconda all the way down to Deer Lodge. It was all the hay ground that the Anaconda Company had bought. Every farm over there and he had the contract to hay that. So I was able to go into Bob (and I never told my mother) to pay her whole bill for the summer so that when she went back in September, she owed nothing. Wow. So it was hard work. You ate on your tractor. You were in the field from the time the sun went up to the time the sun went down.

The older Ueland boys knew how to work. And Ron Ueland who owns Metal down there, I saw Ole put him on a tractor when he was five years old. I was baling in one field and he took Ron and his little legs sticking down off the seat. He laid the field out and then he put Ron on that tractor. And here's Ron with a big smile on his face and Ole walked up to his pickup. And he's up there drinking coffee, watching Ron rake the field at five years old. And I'm thinking, well, what if he falls off the tractor? I mean.

Crain: That might explain. You know, one of those brothers didn't have very many fingers either.

Keane: He got whacked on the tailgate of a truck. That's where he lost his finger. Ray, I always tell Ray I saved his life. And you know Ray, it's his attitude. Ray ran a mower. And there were two shifts. So there were night shift mowers and rakers and then balers. I was running a baler. But you only baled in the daytime. So Ray comes to me. And this kid had just worked all day and he's probably in about the sixth grade, seventh grade maybe. Now he had just worked all day because I'm in high school. So I don't know, you'd have to ask Ray. But he just worked all day mowing, right? So he said to me, the mower from Anaconda never showed up, so I have to go mowing tonight. So I said, do you have any clothes?

On my baler I had a leather jacket and hat and gloves. And he said, "No, I don't have anything." So I gave him the jacket and a hat and the gloves. And so we go home now. The next day, we're coming out to work. Here comes Ray out of the field. "Oh, thanks. Thanks. Boy, I really needed that jacket and I needed all of it. It got kind of cold out there." And then he gives me my stuff. And he said, "Guess what the good news is?" I said, "What?" He says, "Dad's not going to make me work today. I get to go to sleep." Now, this kid had just worked 24 hours. And there was Martin and Carl, I mean . . . So you learn a great deal and you build those relationships that last you the rest of your life.

Crain: I just want to go back there. So Ole Ueland, did he buy the land? The Anaconda Company clearly bought all that hay land during the environmental crisis. So did Ole just contract to hay it? Did he keep the hay?

Keane: In those days Doc Ferguson owned all the land. He leased it from the Anaconda Company for a buck an acre. So Ole contracted with Doc Ferguson to hay all Doc Ferguson's land and then in later years the Ueland's owned a piece of that. I don't know how much over there, but you'd have to talk to them about it. But that's why the connection came, because Doc Ferguson was the vet who leased all that acre for a buck an acre a year.

Crain: Okay, good. So then you graduated. Did you go to the military?

Keane: I grew up in the Vietnam era. I was there. My number came up in the draft, went down to the thing. I remember going into the recruiting guys. He said, "Everybody!" We're all in our shorts. Big room full of guys from all over, all in our shorts. This guy walks in and says, "Everybody raise your right hand." So we all put our right up. "Stick your index finger out. Move your index finger. You all pass." So then they lined you all up and you started going through the physical. So I got a 1-Y because I had been shot. I couldn't see. I can't see very good out of my right eye. And so that's why I didn't go to the military.

But what I did when I got out of high school was . . . My uncle came up, the one I used to stay with in California, Frank. But now he lived in Hawaii, so I thought, well, he had all these great pictures. It was winter in Montana. He showed me all these pictures of Hawaii. And so there was a neighbor, Tommy Grady, who was in the military who had to go down to California to get to military training at the end of May. So I rode with Tommy Grady and a couple other guys that were going down for their military training. Rode to California and got a one way ticket to Hawaii for $99 that I had saved up. So I went over and I stayed with my Uncle Frank. I was going to stay the summer and I liked it there. It was just great.

This was another great time in Hawaii. I just had so [much fun.] Another episode of my life where I had so much fun. So after the summer, I said, well, maybe I can go to school here. He said, "Great. If you want to stay. That's fine." So I lived in Kaneohe and so the university is on the other side of the island. So I end up going to the dentist. I said, "God, I need a ride to school." And she said, "Well, I'm not going back this year. And if you want to ride, you can ride in my car pool." I said, "Okay." So she said to be on this corner just above where I lived. And they'll pick you up. There were four Japanese girls and me who rode in this car pool. And I rode with them for two years and just had a great time with the four Japanese girls. After awhile people said, "Well, hey, you're in that car pool. It's all girls. And you." I said, "Yeah, they're all my cousins." So I rode with them. So I went to the University of Hawaii then for two years.

Built some great relationships. And I never thought of it till years later, but the 1960s were just 15 years after the Second World War. So there's a lot of those things. And I had a lot of Japanese friends. Japanese Americans my age, whose families lived in Hawaii all their life, but then who watched a lot of their relatives interned in in this country. So that was real educational. And for me, it was part of the broadening of my education because Jim Keane in Hawaii, Jim, is a real popular Hawaiian name, named Kemo and Keane is K-E-A-N and is Keoni. So I would be at places where. They always called me Kemo and then where we'd pull our driver's license out. You'd be at a party with a whole bunch of local guys and just like anywhere. Here's the white guy sitting there and my friends would say, "That's Kemo over there." So you pull your driver's license out. And I had a friend who was Portuguese and his name was Lester Williams. "So, oh are you local?" I say, "Yes. Local as it gets." It really was a great education to cross cultures because in Hawaii, you know, haole, white guy. So here I am, the whitest guy going. And I'm getting by as a local.

And great stuff. Great. There was a place, a great [inaudible], where I think his dad had some big government job and had a beautiful house down on the ocean. And so they take you spearfishing. So we're all out there spearfishing. And what you would take out is you take tennis shoes and you'd walk over this coral reef a long way out there, and then you'd take the tennis shoes off, put your fins on and then you'd tie the tennis shoes. And they used like coconuts with a big wire on them. And you tie all the tennis shoes on one.

Well, now they're out there going to spearfish, right? And this great Khushi comes to me and he said, "I'll watch. Don't worry." He said. "And when you get tired, you just come up and lay your hands on that coconut. But don't push down and just float there and you'll rest. Cause we're gonna be out here awhile." Three and a half hours later, we're still out there swimming. So you learn to survive in a totally different environment. And he'd watch me. And you'd watch them spearfishing. And it was so fascinating. The fish would be here and they'd shoot the thing here and the fish would swim into it. And I'd shoot, they called them hinge guns. And they had a big kind of surgical rubber thing. And they have a hinge up on the top. And you stick this spear, it's about six feet long. It's got a barb on the end. And there was no string on the ones they used. So when the spear shot, off it went. You had to go get your spear. But they would hit it with the fish. Then they take the fish and tie it on the wire on this other coconut floater. And the only fish I ever shot was a . . . this guy held it on a rock while I shot it. Because you would shoot at the fish and it would be gone, but they'd shoot . . .

And then there were big caves there. And you'd go down and you'd look in there. And you'd watch . . . These local guys would go down. And you'd watch them swim in the cave. And I'd be up on the surface looking down. The only thing you see is their fins out there. They're in there and then all of a sudden they come out with a fish. Well, you go down and look at the cave and it's just like dark in there. "How do you see it there?" Well, you've got to go in there and you wait. And then after your eyes get adjusted, you'll see the fish's eyes. Then you shoot the fish. I couldn't have swam into the cave to make myself confident enough to do that. So I had all kinds of experience with all the island. I lived in Kaneohe. Bellows Beach, all the great beaches. So I turned into a real local guy over there. I was able to fit into a culture that I probably didn't belong in.

Crain: And you were there for two years.

Keane: Two years. Yeah.

Crain: And then what?

Keane: So after Hawaii, I came back and this kind of starts my dynamite career, really. So I came back and went to Montana Tech and I went to Montana Tech for two years. This is where you find out what Butte is really about. So you're going to Montana Tech. And one of the things that most people don't understand in this community. At Montana Tech, you could get two days in the underground mines and any student that wanted to work and passed a physical could get two days a week. And the other part is a lot of people from around the country, Mike Keagan, for one, could work all summer. So here's a guy, a school guy with a brand new car because he could work all summer in the underground mines, if they were a good worker. So you start two

days a week in the underground mines. One or two days. So Bill Kirkpatrick, who I went to high school with, his dad was a head attorney. And so I went up to the sixth floor and I said, "Hey, can I get two days a week?" And they said, "Yeah." So Powell was the superintendent up at the Steward. And so he called and said, "Hey, I'm sending Jimmy Keane. He's working one day, but he wants two." So I could get two days a week. So you start out and you start working underground and you find out you're working digging ditch. You're doing whatever needs to be done. But to me, the most interesting part of mining or pulling chutes or tramming ore or busting rock . . . so you start getting into the mining culture. Your day's pay. You get day's pay. But the other part, you watch the contract miners, they're making big money.
Crain: Tell us what what a day's pay would get versus a contract miner.

Keane: Good contract miners, the good ones, they made more than the head of the company. And I don't think people really understand. Let me explain here. Here's how it works. Everybody is union. But when you say contract, you think of something else. These guys are union guys. And I call it. When you think of mining, it's really like the military. It's like there's different categories. There's the pipemen and there's the ropemen and there's a boilermaker. There's the engineer running the hoist. There's the day's pay miners. There's the contract miners. There's a boilermaker on the surface. There's a foundry in Anaconda. There's people moving all this material. There's your dad running the railroad? It's an organized military operation. But the contract miner is at the head of production. He's the guy who makes everything else work. And the contract miner gets paid for what he does. So the contract miner can't go below a day's pay. He's a union guy. But the contractor gets a cubic foot of breakage going ahead. Timber he sets. Rail he sets. So he gets that. And there is a level where they measure all this and then you get paid above that.

Crain: So they get paid above day's pay.

Keane: Oh, God, yeah.

Crain: They get day's pay plus.

Keane: Day's pay plus whatever they do. Now if they're in a bad place and they don't get much done, or they're just getting it set up, they get day's pay. So you can't go below that. But you can sure go above that. And this system is run around the world. But it started here. And if you go down to the Stillwater, the same things happen at the Stillwater Mine today. So every week on Thursday, at every mine that's working in Butte, they called it "the board" and it was called "topping the board". And the board lists out all the contracts in that mine for that week. And who made it. They're listed out by how much you made. So it's a very competitive market. So to top the board consistently is a big deal. And the two guys in my era in the 1960s at the Steward was Irv Shields, and I can't remember his name. He lived down an Iron Street. Cannonball, Cannonball and Irv Shields topped the board all the time.

Crain: Were they two separate contracts. Or were they partners?

Keane: No, they were partners. Other contracts had four partners, day shift and afternoon shift. Cannonball and Irv only worked alone because they were the best in the mine. So me, little

greedy Jimmy, goes, hey, I'm a day's pay guy, but if I get into a contract, I can make a shift of that contract. So on Thursday, there's always somebody who spent too much time in the bar and you can't work alone. You couldn't. You can't work alone. You have to have a partner. So if you walked in the makeup room, you'd say, "Got any contracts?" Well, they'd look around. So, they give you a contract. Well, I'm looking, hey, I'm gonna get paid a shift of this contract, but it was like putting a Babe Ruth player in with a professional. And it was another one of the most fascinating look at people and their personalities, because you would have the guy that said, "Ah, Jesus, another stupid college kid and my brother's off. I'm stuck with you." Or, "Hey, do you want to learn something, kid?"

So you've got the whole gamut of these professionals. People do not understand how gifted and how hard they work. When you think for eight hours a day, not a bad move because you're in this competition with that board that's going to be published because they measure everything, every week. And you had the right to complain about whether it was right or wrong too. So all these guys kept track of everything they were doing. So I worked in all kinds of different contracts that I never would have been allowed to do because I wasn't good enough to be allowed to do it. Because I wasn't at that level. But if I got a good contract, in one day's work, I could make like three days' pay. So it was great for me.

Crain: Do you remember what day's pay was?

Keane: Oh, God, in fact, I got an old check from that time. Day's pay was probably . . . I should bring up those checks. That's another story when I was working. It was probably $35 a day. We can actually track that. But the other thing on the hill, every Thursday at every mine that was operating in the 60s, everybody knew who topped the board at every mine.

Crain: Oh yeah. That would be big competition.

Keane: That's big competition whether the guys at the Kelley or the Steward or the Mountain Con. But I got to work everywhere. But people have no conception how hardworking these guys were. And I got one shift in with Cannonball and Irv Shields. So the day before somebody shut their fan off to the heading that they were working. And Cannonball ended up breathing the air off the drill and got sick, but they got the round in. So I walk in there, "Got any contracts? Oo . . . I'll take that one." So Irv Shields, probably one of the best miners on the hill. And I'm going to get to work with him.

And so when you went to work, I'm expecting to get the old stuff that I've got. I mean, here you're working with the best. He's gonna be complaining. The guy treated me just fantastic. And they were running a drift themselves and a raise at the same time. Two guys. And so the raise, they were in the raise and it was hotter than hell. It was just hot. They had their own fan bag back there. And we walked down. You were the first to go down because contract miners had to get to their thing. They would lower those guys first so they could get to their work. So he comes back and there was a station, they always had ice there at it. And so he says, "Chip some ice, eat some ice. You're going to need it." So we eat ice and he took a big, huge chunk with him. So we go back to where he's working and we climb up in this raise and he gets the fan bag up there. And they blew the timbers. "We'll get the timber back in."

Now I'm thinking, oh, Jesus, if we just do that, we won't get paid. So I turned to him and I said, "Well, do you think we could get the round?" And he looked at me like, "Oh, Christ." He says, "Hey, kid, you want to get the round?" I said, "Yeah," because I'm thinking we want to keep the footage going to cubic yards of breakage. So he says, "OK, you're going to have to go down and wrestle this timber up." And he gave me a list. And he says, get it back here as fast as you can. So I go get the timber, we hoist it up into the raise.

We get up there and he's taken these timbers and I said, "Can I help you?" You know, like, we're going to get on each end. And he said, "No, I think you'd be better just getting out of my way." And he throws a plank across the opening and he takes these timbers and he puts them in. He throws them all in place. And then we had all the blocks up there and he said, "Now you got to get these blocked in so I can get drilling, if we're going to get the round." And I'm over there, I'm dying. I had already thrown my breakfast up. So I get the blocks in there and I'm getting the blocks in and so then we get that. And so he gets the buzzie set up. You drill two feet. Take that out. Drill four feet. Take that out. Drill six feet. So he drills a bunch of holes with the two footer. Then he starts swapping bits here. And I said, "Can I help?" He says, "Nah, I think I'll do all right." And you're watching this guy drill these holes and move it over here and keep drilling and pull this other one out. And I'm going, "Man, this is like a magician here." So we get the round. And I couldn't eat lunch.

And he's talking about different stuff, just as happy as a clam. And then we were late getting out. And we got the round and we're walking out and we're walking out late, probably about half hour late, and so we're walking out. And I think I was going into heatstroke. And I'm just dragging. I'm just walking behind. He's walking ahead of me. And I can hear to this day, he said, "Oh, well, you know, I think I'll go home and ride horses tonight." And I'm thinking, I'm hoping I get home. I slept for two days. I went to bed and I slept until Sunday. People have no idea how accomplished and how skillful these guys were. And you've been in other places where you'd walk in and here's a giant thing that's all timber, as far as you can see. All set through a place that should just go, "Look at this. It's a dam underground city down here."

So to me, I think it's a shame, first that the Butte mines closed, thanks to ARCO in 1983 because they didn't have to. That's an opinion of big companies just writing you off. And that's what companies do. But the work that was done here by the people over a period of 100 years is just simply amazing. And I got to see it all.

Crain: So tell us about how you met your sweet Dolores.

Keane: Well, back in the 60s, we have to go back there. Back in the 60s, one thing everybody wants to do is learn to fly. So I walked out to the airport one day and there was a plane out there and it said for sale. So anyway, I walked over to the Butte Airport and I said, "How much for that plane?" And they said, "Well, it's $5000." And I said, "Okay." I said, "But I don't know how to fly." And they said, "Well, that is a problem." So Ambrose from Ambrose Trucking at that time owned the Butte Arrow. So I said, "Well, why don't you go over and talk to Ambrose?" So I walked over to his office and walked in and he had a trucking company, but his home was in Idaho. So he'd fly to Idaho. And so he bought the Butte Arrow. And so I walked over and I said,

"Hey, I'd buy that plane from you, except you got to teach me how to fly." He said, "In other words, you want a lesson?" So I said, "Yeah." So he thought for a minute he says, "Okay, buy the plane, and we'll teach you how to fly." So I bought the plane, had a great time with that. Flew it all over. Flew it out salmon fishing. Flew it with Pat Robbins. Took Red.

We had some great fishing trips. So anyway, Philomena [inaudible] and some people wanted to go out to Seattle. So Philomena is my wife's sister. Joe [inaudible]. I'd work with Joe in the pit. So I said, "Well, I'll fly out to Seattle." I was always looking for some place to go. So I flew them out to Seattle. Anyway, we had a great trip and flew them back. So I knew Joe. Now I know Phil. And then a whole other part of my life. So Mitzi Daley said to me, "Hey, Philomena has got a sister who just came and is about your age." So I walked into Phil's house. Dolores was there and I made some smart-ass comments like I usually do. And so she didn't really like me at first. But six weeks later, we were married. So that's kinda. Maybe eight weeks.

So I won a bet with Brock Cunningham, one of my best friends of my life. His wife, Fritzie, I made a bet with her probably when I was 23 years old. I wouldn't get married till I was 30. So I turned 30 on December 23rd, got married on December 26. So I won a five dollar bet for that.

Crain: You won more than five dollars. Yeah. You did pretty well.

Keane: But that's how I met her. And so we got married and one of my favorite stories. So that was 1971. Well, her family, her three brothers, she's from a big family, but the three brothers were in Belfast and her mother was there in Belfast too. No, she was in England with Lillian. So anyway, we flew over there. They had never met me. The only ones that met me were Joe and Phil. So the rest of the family hadn't met me.

So the following May, we fly over to Ireland. This is in the height of the Troubles over there, too. So we fly into London and go to Birmingham. That's where Lillian was. But then we take a trip over to Belfast. Now, she had the three brothers there. And this is when I really learned what real Irish families are all about. So her brother Tom, and right today there's only Dolores and Tom left. There was Lillian and there was Phil and then there was Tom, so he's like number four, but then there's two other brothers in Belfast. So we go there. We're there. So Tom says, "I'd like to take a walk with you." So we're walking. And he said, "Gee, Dolores goes to America and then she gets married." "Well, yeah, we kind of fell in love, you know." "You know Dolores is the baby of the family. She's real special." I'm thinking, what the heck, he keeps talking about the baby. "Well, boy, you know, she went to American. Is everything alright?" And I said, "Well, yeah, we just kind of fell in love and everything's fine." And he said, "Oh lad, I don't think you're really getting it here." And he put his arm around me and he said, "She's the baby of the family. And we here in Belfast have a real easy way to solve our problem. And lad, we don't want you to become one of them. Let's go back to the house. We're going to the IRA party tonight."

And I'm thinking, what have you got me involved with here? What is going on here? I kind of panicked for a minute there. You did fine. her. And Tom's a great guy. But yeah, there was a real question. How did this happen? What's going on? Don't you become a problem for us. It's serious business.

Crain: So interesting.

Keane: But I actually kind of met my wife because of an airplane.

Crain: Do you still fly?

Keane: I haven't flown in a long time. And actually, I sold the airplane to get a down payment on a house. I sold it in Canada. So. And the other thing that I had throughout my life (part of that was from my Hawaiian experience) I learned to love the water. At the University of Hawaii, you could take two things. You could take either swimming or golf. And if you took golf, it was down on the quarry. You had to walk down there and some of the days were hot. Or you could swim right up on campus. So I took swimming. So I learned to love the water and the island and everything around.

So when I was there, I was running with some of the guys I worked with in a gas station there, some local guys, and we would go out on a boat and they would water ski. They would water ski and so they would take it and you'd sit in this boat. And I said, "Well, can I try?" And they'd say, "No, you can't." So you're watching these guys waterski. So after about three times. They had circles that they'd go on. I mean, these guys were born in the water. I mean, they had all kinds of different things. So one guy says, "Okay, you can go." And this was after three times with him. And I thought, I am not going to fall. If I fall, they'll never let me go again. So I learned to water ski in Hawaii. So when I got back in about 1964. I bought this big jet boat. I bought it in California and I brought it up here and I mean, that was a whole segment of my life with this boat. The only one who thought I wasn't crazy was Tom McGree, who I had worked for over a whole period of time, which I could talk to you about Tom McGree for two hours or three hours.

And Tom Mcgree was the one who said, "Hey, that boat I want to rent from you." And so he would take my boat and my truck and his whole family. So he's the only one who really didn't think I was nuts. And I claim that the only reason all the Mcgree's and Joyce's and all those other kids had any fun in their life was on account of me. And Red Robins, that's how that's how my sister met Pat Robbins was through that boat. We were camped up at Eccleston's and Pat came over and my sister was cooking hamburgers. And then we had many great trips with that boat. In fact, McGree's still have the boat. I bought a new one. But just to show you, there's that period of Tom McGree, Hank Bertoglio, [inaudible] But who just had respect for everybody.

Crain: Tom McGree, they called Tucker. And he had the garbage business.

Keane: He had the garbage business. And I worked for him on the mail. I worked for him on the thing and I was a little older. Susie was his oldest. And he was very . . . he could get mad. The thing I learned very early on, if he took his baseball hat off, stay away from him because he was mad and he loved his sleep. I blew up some of his trucks. He had a mail route to Great Falls. And on Sunday night, if you drove the mail truck, you'd get to take a station wagon. It was an Oldsmobile station wagon. It was the fastest thing I ever had. It would go 130 miles an hour. Now I'm in a contest with myself. I drove up to Great Falls as fast as I could. You had to stop in Helena and go to Great Falls to pick the mail up. The guy in Great Falls said, "You can't be here this fast." I said, "Well, I'm here, so give me the mail."

Because it was a short mail day on Sunday. I drove back and I blew a tire out and I was doing 130 miles an hour and a tire blew out. And by the time I got the car stopped, the tire was just shredded. There was nothing left on the tire. And now I'm ruining my record, right? So I jack it up, change a tire, get to Helena. I pulled into the Butte post office and the guy said, "You can't be this early." I said, "Well, I'm here." So now I take the car over, park it back at their house, write a note. "Oh, I had a flat tire." So I stick that note on the dashboard. The next day, here comes Tucker. "What the hell are you doing? I mean, flat tire, there's nothing left of the tire."

But my favorite story about Tucker. Now I'm out. I'm single. New Year's. I'm going to pick the mail up. And in those days, a train came into Butte and they had the old car, the mail car on there. And you would just pull a truck up next to the mail car and they'd throw the first class out and you'd throw the first class in. And these guys, they still wore guns and everything on the mail car. So I slept in. I had a big night the night before, so I slept in. And then when I woke up, I drove from my house and I caught Tom. Tom Junior was driving a mail truck up. So I said, "Here, just take my car and I'll take the mail truck." And Tucker hated to be woke up. "Well, they have already called him that you're not here. There's nobody here." So I get the mail truck and I'm pulled up to the mail car.

And here comes Tucker in the Oldsmobile. And I yelled to the guy in the mail car, "Open that other door on the other side." So he took his hat off and he started yelling, "Damn you, Jim!" And I ran through the mail car like I'm going out the other side and then he'd get back in his car and I'd come back in the truck and then he'd wait a minute. He'd get back out. And he'd just start and then I'd run out. I ran out the other side. So finally, he said, "That's it. Damn you!" I wasn't going to be there when he came over. You didn't want him close to you when he was mad. And his wife, Elaine was great. She protected me. You'd call up and she would say, "Don't come down yet, Jim. Don't come down yet." You had to stay away for a while. But at the same time, he was the same kind, you know, he would get mad at you. But he loved you at the same time. And your dad had all those. Where did they go? There was Rock Cunningham. Your dad. Kevin Shannon. And all that crew that went to Bruce's Donutshop. They were all crazy down there.

Crain: Yes, they were crazy. And they did a bunch of crazy things.

Keane: They did a bunch of crazy things, too. You're younger than them, but you got in on the tail end of it, if you paid attention. One last story. So Tucker played golf later. So they're all out on the golf course. So they're down there. And so I'm in the airplane. And I came down and they all had to dive on the ground.

Crain: That must have felt good. He couldn't catch you. Tell about a couple of industrial accidents that you had. And then how did you become an operating engineer?

Keane: [inaudible mumbling] So the Robin's, Red, I started to go with him because he was a welder and it's kind of how I became a welder . . . The shop they still have down there, it was, Lane, one of my second cousins had it. And Frances Lane . . . I actually live in their house today.

Crain: So where's the shop located at?

Keane: 598 East Front Street. Right across from the Executive Village. So they had a guy running the shop. Francis Lane did, because her husband had passed away. Herb Lane. And he had passed away. And so she rented it out but that didn't work out. So Red Robins had a shop up on Main Street. And all like Mike and Bert and Pat and all these people worked there making rock bolt plates for the underground mines and other things. And so the part of it was that I said to Red, I said, she wants to sell that place. So anyway, Red ended up buying that shop down on Front Street. And then he moved down there and worked there for a number years but then Red died young, fairly young too.

So I bought the shop from Red and because I was welding and working. For me I had a job at the State Highway Department. I had a job running the shop. I had worked for McGree. I could do some of those things at the same time. There was another, you know, David Fisher. He's another guy from the boulevard. We were on the garbage truck. In those days, you had three men on there, two outside, one inside. You'd rotate. We'd be driving out to the dump. We were on the interstate, but I was so tired from working on all these jobs that I actually would fall asleep driving down the interstate. And David would say, "Come on, come on, stay awake. You stay awake. Your turn to drive." But it was great because I had to get ready to have my weekend and boating and all the other stuff. So it's hard to have fun.

Crain: Yeah, it takes work.

Keane: I think the one time you're talking about in the shop.

Crain: My dad came in on it.

Keane: Well your dad actually took me to the hospital. I was making a compressor and I had this tank. What happened was I put the compressor on it and it was pumping up and it was pumping up for the first time. And this is another one of the lucky things. So the tank was kind of crossways in the shop with the receiver on it. And there were a few people in there and they had left and I was standing behind the tank. And I walked over to the side a little bit. And it was about time for it to kick off. And the end blew out of the tank and it took a piece, a two inch angle iron and rolled it right up.

But it blew the pants off of me. My pants were split. And my face, all the stuff that came out, it was all blackened. This thing went right through the overhead door and halfway out onto the street. And so I kind of stagger out of the shop and I'm standing there. Your dad comes and says, "Hey, I think you need to go to the hospital." So I said, "Well, what about the thing out in the middle of the street?" And he said, "Somebody will take care of it. Jim, just get in the car. We're taking you to the hospital." So I'm lucky I'm not blind from it, but along with the fireworks and the other things.

Crain: And shot in the head. So one of the things I want to hearken back to, the Robins' kids are also welders. So what's the name of their business?

Keane: Seacast and then Precision Products. They come from like the Ueland's. Hard Work. They made rock bolt washers for the underground mines. And their dad worked on the hill as a welder. Then there were people, he said, "Hey, I'd like to start my own business."

Red had a way . . . When you're drilling those drill chucks, they're cheaper to replace now, but they actually wear out. So they would rotate and then the steel. So he was real good at heating that whole thing up with a torch and then taking stellite rod. I don't know how he did it. And then he would actually get that with molten . . . and then he would take the drill steel and stick it in there. And he could make a new drill chuck. That's what his business started as. And then that would be it. And they lasted about three times as long as ones they would buy. So that became kind of the first staple. Then they started the salvage department.

One thing about Butte from all the construction, when you look at all the old pictures, everybody forgets all the steel that was hauled in there. Well, in the underground mines, at first it was timber. But later on, it's just like if you go over into the Orphan Boy, they have what they call rock bolts and it's about a six foot piece of steel. The early ones had a wedge on the bottom of them. But you need a washer. So they would bring all this scrap steel down to Red's. And they would just give that to him. And he made rock bolt plates. And he would make those. And they used to use about ten thousand a month in the underground mine. Ten thousand of these rock bolts. So I. So when he died, I ended up working for Mary in the shop.

And then I ended up buying the shop from him. But so Bert and Mike, the older ones, Ray and Pat all worked for their dad. But Bert and Mike worked for me. And I claim I was the nicest boss they ever had. But they were always good and they always had a talent. Bert is kind of an artist. He is very good. And I have pictures of him going off to college with an old trailer. It looks like something out of the Grapes of Wrath. But it just shows. People keep at it. Hard work.

Crain: Hard work.

Keane: I think that's part of the whole community psyche. And the other part. So the question you have to ask yourself, why is Ron Ueland and Bert and Mike back here? Because the reason is because they loved the place. And I think it's part of that, that growing up, you never get rid of it.

Crain: So how did you get into the Operators' Union and your work with the Job Corps?

Keane: There was a guy who was a business agent for the Operating Engineers, Bob Davis. Guess what Bob had? He had an airplane, too. So I met Bob Davis flying airplanes out at the airport. He said to me one time, "Hey, we've got some work out for FNS, but we need somebody to fill in. We're out of members." I said, "Sure, I'll fill in." So I got in the operating engineers there. Bob Davis sent me out. And that's when road construction was going on. There were so many jobs. People have no conception anymore just how great the work was around here. So I went and worked those couple of jobs. They were for the company out by the percip plant. So I started liking that.

And then when the company shut down in '83, I said, I want to go into construction with the

operating engineers. So I got sent over to the lime quarry for Don Stanosich. The smelter was running. I went over there for a two week job and ended up there for seven years. And then there were other construction jobs in between. I went to like a road job down at Garrison Junction. And so I would use the operators as kind of a fill in place until when the mine started. I kept one guy working, but I kind of started to like the construction because, you know, I have a family. And it was good work. And I liked the work. So then I ended up going to . . . I was working in Anaconda, and it's about the time they were shutting down the smelter. Well, that's where the job at the lime quarry was, providing lime rock for the smelter. And, hey, it's the end of it.

You know, if they're shutting the smelter down, there's going to be no work here. They're saying it's going to last, but it isn't. So there was a thing coming up training welders down at Twin Bridges. So I went down to Twin Bridges for the operators, training welders down there. And then what happened there? I was down there and then the union, the Operating Engineers' Union needed somebody to run the apprentice program. So I ran the Operating Engineers' apprentice program for about ten years. And to me, that was my gift of understanding Montana, because the work was all over the state, putting people to work. That's when they were building Colstrip, three and four. There were road jobs all over the place. You were putting young people to work, which was great. That's how I ended up at the place up in Helena because the job was out of Helena. It was really a great job training young people to get a skill that's going to last them a lifetime. And it's kind of funny, the ones that I trained, now are retiring. That's how I got into the operating engineers and I ended up training operating engineers.

And then I went to the . . . The Job Corps guys actually made more money than my job as apprentice director for the operating engineers. So a job came up at the Job Corps so I knew the people from the operators that ran the program at the Job Corps. And what a lot of people don't understand - the carpentry and operating engineers up there. They're on a contract up there. They aren't part of the Forest Service. You drive Forest Service equipment. So I said, "Send me up to the Job Corps." So I took one of the jobs at the Job Corps, and ended up working for the operating engineers up there, training young people for another 10 years. And then while I was up there at the Job Corps, a couple of times, you know, I was involved in the union as president of the local 400.

And so then I ran for the business manager and won that. I was a business manager for the operating engineers. But through the apprentice program, you got to travel the state seeing everything and you had to build a good relationship with contractors and everything. And then and when you became business manager and then at the same time, I got elected to the legislature. So it was super fun to be in the legislature and also be in the operating engineers because you'd go on a nonunion job and they'd say, "Hey, this is a nonunion job, we don't want you here." And I said, "Oh, no, it's not." So I'd go over to the state guy and say, "I want to see everything that this guy is doing. I want all his papers." They would say, "Wait a minute, you can't do it." I would pull that card out, "Representative," and I said, "Yeah, I can." "Oh yes, sir. Yes, sir. We'll get whatever you need, sir." So I used that to a real advantage in my last years as the business manager. And being elected at the same time. And that's when I retired.

One of the things I always think about is over here at the Miners' Union. It was a great contract. It was in the early days when I was in the operating engineers and they were voting on a new

contract. And it was a three year contract. And the raise was a dollar which would be even unheard of today. And they also were getting money put in a pension plan. And I'm sitting there and I said, "I don't know why we're wasting money putting it in this pension plan. We should put that on a check, too." And there was an old guy sitting next to me and said, "Listen, kid," he says, "you're voting for this contract. You're voting for this pension, too. We've had nothing here. And you're voting for this." So I voted for it.

But I often think of that fellow because he got a little bit out of it. But that pension plan, the operating engineer pension plan, is probably one of the best things that ever happened to me. And people don't understand. It's a defined benefit plan. And do you know what the return on it is? When I retired? 40 percent. So I got all the money that I paid into that pension in two and a half years. I've been retired for 10 years out of that pension plan. And those plans are just so valuable. And now on 401k's and all those things, I mean, it's a shell game that we're all going to pay for someday.

Crain: Yeah, you're right about that.

Keane: So, yeah. So it was great in the operating engineers. And it was good fun. But part of the airplane got me into the operating engineers because I flew with the business . . . Everything is interconnected in my life.

Crain: It's wonderful. So, Clark, do you have anything you want to ask Jim?

Grant: I was curious, did the bullet leave?

Keane: No, the bullet, actually, if I go like this, you can see where there's a mark right in it. Actually, I was super lucky because I was looking down the barrel. I just moved my head. It went right . . . This is where they took the bone out. And part of it stayed here. And where I was real lucky is a third of the bullet spun on the inside of my skull and sits on the top of my head.

Crain: And it's still there.

Keane: It's still there. And they can't do anything. And the other part, part of the bones or whatever, shattered and cut across my retina. So I don't have real good vision out of my right eye. And that was trouble getting a pilot's license. But I had to find the right doctor to do that. But it sits there and I can't have, like an MRI because . . . and then the other part of it from the explosion, I've got all kinds of rust and particles in both my eyes. When I used to go [to the doctor] they'd say, "God, you're so lucky." Because I didn't get in the front part of it, but it would really cause a lot of damage because that heats up metal if you have an MRI. So I can't have that.

Grant: How many terms were you a legislator? Were you also a senator?

Keane: Yeah, I've been in the legislature. They said you couldn't do this, but you actually can. I termed out in the house, eight years. I termed out in the Senate eight years. And I'm back in the House last year and I'm running this time. And my opposition dropped out, so I'll be elected. The reason you can do that is what the law in Montana said is that you can serve eight years in either

house in a 16 year period. So I've served consistently for 16 years. So I'm in a new 16 year period. So there's also an attorney general opinion on that. Yes, that's what the law says. But I think I was the first guy to consistently serve eight, eight and then go back to the house. And I think a lot of people don't want to go back to the house. It's a lot more dynamic because they're just twice as many people there. But I always like the house. It's kind of like Butte in the early days. It's more fun and more entertaining and crazier. And you see more people. Like Lou Jones, Jonathan Windyboy, Mary Farrell's running back for the house.

So you're seeing it more and more. People think term limits are a good thing. Term limits is not a good thing. It's like you're not going to go to the doctor and say, "Oh, I want the newest guy to do my operation." You want somebody with skills. You're not going to go to the dentist, say, "Oh, I don't need anybody that is trained, just work on me." And the legislature is the same way. It takes a while to understand. It's a difficult process. I like it. My first sessions were very tough and I thought, wow, this is kind of fun because they were tough. And it's the same thing as being in Hawaii or being in all these. The personalities are great. And the difference, if you respect everybody, then I think you don't mind as much.

One of my favorites. My first term, I think why I liked it so much, it was like many of the other things I did. There were two Republicans that sat on either side of me in my first session. And Sylvia [inaudible] was from Superior. But, you know, they were very fair people. They wanted to help you. They wanted to do it. And so you learned to work with them. And Bob Lawson from up at Whitefish, just good people. And Don Steinbizer, who's about my age, he's a banker, big, huge ag guy, from over by Sydney. Now, he and I have about as much in common as nothing. And we ended up becoming best friends because I said to Don once, "Hey, this banking bill, is it any good will?" "Well, let me explain it to you." I said, "Hey, Don, just tell me if it's good or bad. I mean, I don't want to learn about banking, you already know that. Just tell me if it's good or bad." And that's all I needed to know and then you'd vote with them. And for me, Don always voted with me on labor issues. Here's a conservative ag guy voting on labor issues. Why? Because he trusted me. And that's what I think I enjoyed about it. Now as term limits went on, you see the deterioration. But that doesn't mean it isn't fun. It might be more difficult, but that doesn't mean it's bad.

Crain: So, Jim, this morning's paper, do you want to talk about that?

Keane: Oh, it's great news, man.

Crain: What's the news?

Keane: Oh, the news is the Veterans' Home. That's the tenacity. You've got to hang in. And that's the Butte way. You get your teeth kicked in. You hang in. And all those vets. I just thought of those when I first heard of it. Coming up to those hearings, hearing after hearing, year after year, room crowded. And then, "Oh, no, we're not going to vote for it." After they're all gone home. "Oh, we're not voting for it. No, we're not building the vets' home."

Crain: So how many years?

Keane: It's about 10 years. I think from the time Pavlovitch started, it's roughly 10 years. But that's Tester. He did a great job. And I don't care if it's on the record, Daines does not deserve credit for the vets home. If you came with the people that stuck with it all the time.
Crain: And those are the two Montana state U.S. senators. pardon me.

Keane: But Tester is the one who's been there from day one. The state has had their money. It came in tobacco tax over a period of time. And when we first started, we were gonna get the federal money and after a couple of years the state money would be built up to the five million of our share. I mean, we've had the five million ready to go for time. We've been trying to come up with every creative solution that we can. John Sesso, who's been stuck with this. He's been great on this. The other thing about the legislature, the reason Butte does good. We were trained by the people that came before us. Bobby Pavlovich, Joe Quilici, Fritz Daily, Judge Krueger. All those people who had served in the legislature before.

If you're elected from Butte, in my opinion, you're expected to do something, not just take up space up there, not just vote. And it isn't easy. There's been periods of time when the Democrats are in control. It's a lot easier. I've never served in the majority since I've been there, but you've got to figure out a way to get it done. And it's a lot harder. People don't understand that the majority party does make a huge difference. It's like one guy has a hockey stick and the other guy doesn't have anything. So you have to figure out a way to get it done.

One of my favorite deals that is coming up, Frank Gilmore in 2005 said, I called him up and I said, "Well, what do you want at Montana Tech?" And he said, "Well, I can't talk because Denison would muzzle me," to be polite.

Crain: And Denison is?

Keane: He was the president of the university system, which was over Montana Tech.

Crain: And Frank Gilmore was the chancellor.

Keane: And what he wanted was a new petroleum and mining building. And this is the fun part of the political stuff. So, okay, that's what you want. We had a new delegation going up there and things happened. I was castigated. But because I went with a guy named Gary Matthews over Dave Wanzenried and put him in as the Democratic speaker of the House, which a lot of the Democratic Party wasn't happy with. But we were able to put the Butte people on the committees where we needed to put them. And that was in 2005. And guess what? In 2005, after one and three, where we had no money, we had money and I had built some relationships with people up there. And we needed somebody on appropriations and Sesso understood budgets.

So we put him there. And Bill Dennison made sure that the bill for the petroleum building was way down on the list. And we had a bonding bill and Sue Dickenson from Great Falls had the bonding bill. So I asked some friends of mine that I had made to move that up on a priority list. Sue Dickinson wasn't real happy. I claimed I didn't do it, but I actually kind of worked behind the scenes to do it. I thought it was fair for Butte. That's my job. And we moved it up. We got the first funding that year and we didn't get enough. And Gilmore said he'd be able to raise the

money and he couldn't quite raise the money. I always give people at Tech a bad time. The plaque inside there has all the list of all these corporations. But the blood went on the floors of the Capitol. The next session, we got the rest of the money for it. If we didn't strike then and if we hadn't made these relationships prior to it and if Sesso didn't go into that committee, I mean, I could name you 20 things. And if we didn't have people contributing from corporate sponsors to finally get it over the hurdle.

The ironic part when that building was built and half is for the petroleum program and half is for the Bureau of Mines and Geology, who sat in a place over there. The year it opened the petroleum program at Montana Tech doubled. And when you say, oh, God, that's great. You know, when you do that. And the other part that I even love better is the Bureau of Mines and Geology finally got out of that old building and the Bureau of Mines and Geology at Montana Tech is so critical to the infrastructure of Montana. People have no clue. It knows where all the water is. It does all the studies. It does everything. So the Bureau of Mines and Geology no one knows about. But it's critical to the building in Montana. If you're talking about water in Bozeman, close basins or it's all at the Bureau of Mines and Geology. It's just an amazing thing. And they don't care about politics. They care about what's true.

Crain: They're the science guys.

Keane: Science guys. John Metish and the ones before them are just so critical.

Crain: The people at the Bureau have really impressive credentials and tremendous respect around, not just this country, but around the world. I mean, they're a really awesome group of folks.

Keane: The one thing we didn't talk about is probably the best thing.

Crain: What's that?

Keane: Our Lady of the Rockies.

Crain: Our Lady of the Rockies. You were big on the Lady of the Rockies.
Keane: Well, I came later, but I think it's probably the most exciting thing that I've ever done in my life.

Crain: Now, what role did you play in Our Lady of the Rockies.

Keane: Well, Our Lady of the Rockies was . . . it ties in because Bill Barth, who just passed away last week, is probably . . . I've known two people in my life that are great engineers and great workers. I've worked with so many great workers all throughout my career. People who are super skilled, from miners to boilermakers to machinists to just the neatest people in the world. And then there's good engineers, poor engineers. And you've seen some great guys that can adapt. And Bob McCann is one of them from Helena. But there's very few that are engineers and workers. I've only known two. And one is Larry Hoffman and the other is Bill Barth. And Bill just passed away. But anyway, I'd worked with Bill and I worked with Bob O'Bill who really

started Our Lady of the Rockies. We all struggle with if there is a God, but if you worked on that project, you just know. And because things happened that you all should have died and nothing happened. Nobody got hurt. And to be there and be involved in that was something else. And the one who got me involved is once again, Thanksgiving family dinner.

And they had the head and the pieces out there at Robert's Rocky Mountain Yard. And Pat Robins says, "Let's go take a look at that." So he called up Joe Roberts and said, "Can we get a tour?" So Joe came over and it's Thanksgiving and he gives us a tour. And he said, "We need some welders, Jim." And I said, "Okay." So I called up. And that's when I started. So it was like Thanksgiving time. After we came down, they had this safety meeting in December and the pilot came in and we're all sitting there and he says now this helicopter picks up x weight. And if I pick up one piece and it's overweight, I'm going back to Nevada. Okay. Every piece, the inside structure is made out of cooler lines and it's big, huge thick pipe that they got for nothing off the hill. So we went out and started stripping all the extra weight out of every section and marking it and bundling it and tying it all together. And it was colder than heck, but they all had to be. So we were stripping the weight down to get it down.

So the helicopter, if you saw that video, that guy that came up and said he wasn't picking nothing up. I think he bagged it and he turned it over to the pilot that came. And then he came up not knowing what he was even involved in. The first section going up was a piece of skirting. It just kind of went on the bottom. And there was no weight to it. If you take a look at that video, that first heavy section that he picked up. It was way overweight. And if you look at the helicopter, it sits there. And then he takes it out and flies it around. And when that piece came in, it had to all be welded in the first one. There were four big, huge things that Bill Barth had all designed to sit together. So they sat those down. And so I got this corner over. They put a welder on each corner because that had to be fastened down before the next morning. The corner I got had a gap in it like that. And I said to Barth, "Hey, I'll be two days welding this up. I can't weld that up." And he said, "Could you make it fit?" "I can make it fit." And so what you do is make a little template and you cut it around the other side. So I took a torch, just whacked it off and pulled a piece out and the thing sat right down there. Everybody is welding. And we stayed up there. We were really late getting out of there. So we welded up that piece. Now I'm down and I said, "Oh God, I just cut that much out of a 90 foot statue."

Crain: At the bottom?

Keane: At the bottom. I called Bill Barth, "You got to bring a transit up. We gotta shoot that next step. Because if it has to be shimmed, we'll have to do it on the next step." So we get up there the next morning and I said, "Did you bring a transit?" to Barth. He said, "Hey, we just got to go with what we got, pal. We just got to get this up." So years later, when we put the inside structure, which is a whole other story. The inside structure in that statue. Where it came from is when they put the power lines out of Colstrip, the big power lines that go through here. They had yards and one of the yards for all the stuff was in Helena. And all this stuff was there. So at the end of the project, I'm working for the Operating Engineers Apprentice program. Right. We have an excess screening thing. So they have all this six inch channel iron, this galvanized big pile of it there. So I took all the galvanized channel iron and just hauled it up to Our Lady of the Rockies. Just hauled it up to the mine yard. And that's where all the inside structure came from.

Crain: So they were going to bring in the next set after you'd cut the big wedge out.

Keane: So years later, Bill Barth actually ran a plumb-bob from the very top of the head all the way to the floor. It's off by a quarter of an inch. So things like that happened. With all the steel for the inside structure was there. All the steel for the building and the interior of it. Frank Gardner said, "Geez, we're going to have to charge you for this." And there was a pile there of all the big tubes, the main supports and all this stuff. Cooler pipe. The whole pile. "I got to charge you for it. If you give me one hundred dollars, it ought to do." And they used all the pipe and there were just a few pipes left over. That hand section, to me, we were in there, in the statue. And the hand section came up, probably one of the scariest situations. So the hand section. The other ones come in and it's typically guys, the big one comes in. We get it welded in place. Right. The second section comes in.

Now, these are the two heavy sections. We get that in, bolted down. Everything is good. We're gonna be done in a heartbeat. Right, guys? We're doing this. So here comes the hand section. The hand section is different because once they knocked the stands out, the hands hung below the bottom of it. And it comes in. And that baby is whirling with these long ropes. And we're in the top. And the pilots come. It's over and it's turning. And the guy over in the corner. These ropes all wrap around that are hanging there. And he goes like this. He just flips them up like this. And all those ropes go up. Ronnie James is ducking there, and he falls off the scaffolding. And some guy grabbed him by the arm and dragged him back onto the plank. And the hand section . . . I was kind of in the back there. And the hand section came flying right by my face. And it stuck just like this on the front section. And the helicopter disappeared. You couldn't see it at all. I thought the whole thing was going to crash right in front of us. The hand section should have ripped right through the front. And it went like this. I don't know how that happened. What made that do that? The helicopter is gone. I can't see it. And we all ran to the front of the statue and we're looking at it. And here's the helicopter, that big hand section comes down and the helicopter is going like that.

Then the hand section swung back and the helicopter was still going down the mountain. And the question I asked the pilot when we had the big party down there, in the meeting, he said, "If we get in trouble and I press the button, it blows that hook apart. We can't fix that. If we blow the hook apart. It's back to Nevada." So it's got to be something drastic. And I asked him, "Why didn't you blow that hook apart?" He was at 106% of power. The gauges were shaking so bad he could hardly read them. And he was going down. And he said, "I knew I had to get her away from you guys. That's when I dove off the mountain." So he said, "I pressed half. It takes quite a bit to press that button. Then when it started to swing back, I started to recover. And he said, "You know, the funniest thing happened to me. All I saw was you guys working all the time on this. And I said, I'm flying it out of here." And that's what happened.

Crain: Amazing story.

Keane: And then the interior structure. All the pieces. Dupont donating all the paint over the years to paint it. I mean it goes on and on. If you don't have faith, and you were involved in that project . . . Hoop Gibson, and we're driving up there, Hoop Gibson says to me, and it's windier

than hell, Hoop says, "If this were an iron job, I wouldn't be here. I want calm weather today." And we're in this Suburban going up there. We pull up there, it's dead calm. It's just still. There's not a breath of air. So this is when the hand section is coming up. This is after we had our two big days. We want nice weather. No wind. We got it. So that's when the hand section came up. After that hand section, everybody realized. Bob came over to me and said, "Will you say a prayer?" "Yeah, I'll say a prayer." So we all held hands and said a prayer. It was like you threw a light switch on. As soon as we finished our prayer, the wind went to 35 knots, just like that. You tell me. That's what made it work. The wind coming up the face of the mountain, giving that helicopter the extra lift to do what it shouldn't have done at sea level.

And then the last day, the helicopter comes up. We're up there having to put stuff together, right? This is after it's all up. We had the big thing at the Copper King. We're up there the last day, or the next day. I mean, it was several days of work after that, you had to go up there. But we're up there. There's probably about ten of us up there on the mountain. And we walked to the edge. And that helicopter came up. You know, we're all crying. The guys in the helicopter are crying. It flew right up to us. And they saluted. We gave them a thumbs up. The National Guard. I mean, it's one of the most exciting times in my life. And they're just sitting there and we're all crying, and they're all crying.

Crain: Amazing.

Keane: The best time of my life. So it's what. Well, I could list them out. I guess I could bring. Yeah. Sorry about that.

Crain: You're good. I love you. You're a good man. So anything else you want to add?

Keane: No.

Crain: That's a nice way to end.

Keane: It was part of . . . the mining came back after that. We're not done yet. My goal is, you know, you still have goals. And one of my goals is that everybody bitches about the water. But my goal is that water is valuable and we have a proposal in right now to take rare earth metals out through Metish's outfit and we're going to start taking rare earth metals out. And the other part, there's so much zinc and iron in the thing. And so the way you clean the water right now, you put lime in it and it just all precipitates in a big sludge that you can't recover. I think some day, if we get the rare earth metals out. The next thing is, this is a perfect time.

Why are they doing the water right now? Because they know they have to do something. If you're BP, and MRI, you're going to have costs in perpetuity. Right? So you know those costs to lime the water, to clean it up. If you recover the stuff out of the minerals and it's even close to where the cost is, there's a better opportunity. So I think in the future, we mine the water. Because then you turn a contamination into a resource and water is going to be one of the most valuable things.

Crain: Well, they've been mining the metals out of that water.

Keane: Well, I worked there, too, at the precip plant. Another favorite. Why did all the guys at the precip plant go to golf and they could all go golf and Ballard and all those, [inaudible] Robinson? That's another place I worked with [Goots?]. [Goots?] got me the job out there. Why could they all go golfing? Because it was a huge moneymaker.

Crain: Oh yeah. Big money. And it has big money.

Keane: Dumped the tin cans from Chicago in and get copper out there. That's where all the iron in the water comes from. The ion exchange or the copper exchange. All that you have to have is acidic water and away you go.

The people of Butte and my elections, they've been awfully good to me here. The community has been good to me. Everybody that I've worked with has been good to me. I wouldn't want to change a minute of my life. I really wouldn't. And when you get to be my age . . .

Crain: That's a pretty big deal. Well, thank you, sir.

Keane: Thank you so much. Thank you.

[END OF RECORDING]