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TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Dr. Kushner came to USF in 1970 as professor emeritus of anthropology.

1968, State University of New College at Brockport

Prior to coming to USF in 1970, Gil and his family were living in Arizona as he was near completion of his Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Arizona. Without snow for nearly eight years, Gil received several offers for positions in anthropology and decided ultimately to return to a colder climate and accept a position at the State University of New York College at Brockport. Attracted by rumors of Brockport becoming the fifth university center, Dr. Kushner decided that the university might offer him several opportunities for advancement. After experiencing one winter in Brockport, Dr. Kushner decided that the town was not for him; immediately he began inquiring about other offers.

Circumstances that brought Dr. Kushner to USF

In the late 1960s, faculty generally worked in four or five places, before eventually settling down. Receiving several offers again, Dr. Kushner accepted a position at a university however before he could begin to move his family the offer was rescinded in part to budget constraints. Hearing of his situation, Roger Grange, the first chair of anthropology at USF, received funding for a line position in the department during the month of March, which was rather late for an appointment in the coming fall semester. Still in Brockport, Dr. Kushner remembers going out to his snow-covered mailbox and opening a letter with green and white letterhead offering him a position in anthropology at USF. Receiving a line position so late in the year, Dr. Grange began frantically calling around to other universities and coincidentally contacted the director of the university that reneged the offer from Dr. Kushner originally. Beginning to establish contact with Dr. Kushner, Dr. Grange asked Dr. Kushner if he had any interest in performing administrative duties. Although not interested in administration, Dr. Kushner began to research the anthropology faculty at USF, and learned that the department had a Dick Waterman who at the time was a third generation Ph.D. Interestingly enough, Dr. Waterman's major professor had been taught by Franz Boas, who was responsible for giving the first Ph.D.'s in anthropology in the United States. Knowing that Dr. Waterman was an Ethnomusicologist as well as a delightful person, Dr. Kushner thought that, "Since he [Dr. Waterman] was third generation Ph.D., he could not do worse and sit

under his feet for a few years and then move on elsewhere.” The warm weather was also an important factor in Dr. Kushner deciding to come to USF.

Physical appearance of USF and surrounding areas, 1970

According to Dr. Kushner, the campus did not look much different than it does today. Of course today, Fowler Avenue also has many more businesses than it had in those early days. The university planted trees, “to make it look like we were in Florida. It was very plain; there were a lot less trees. It was also very sandy; there was nothing between campus and Florida Avenue, there were no stores.” After arriving to Tampa, Dr. Kushner and his family moved to Carrollwood, where many professors at the time were taking up residence.

First impressions of the campus

The total driving time between Kushner’s residence and campus was about fifteen minutes and was mainly through orange groves, “I would drive through the orange groves and smell that sweet smell of the oranges.” Coming out of this landscape, Dr. Kushner would drive to the “desolate campus with the ‘beige,’ very uninteresting buildings.” Having only recently been constructed, Dr. Kushner wondered why the university had not hired an architect to put up interesting buildings that looked like a campus. During a new faculty meeting, Dr. Kushner had an opportunity to meet and speak with President Allen. Curious as to the future plans of the USF campus, Dr. Kushner asked President Allen if there were plans to put vines on any of the buildings. Recalling this particular meeting, Dr. Kushner notes that President Allen was “kind of astonished” when he asked him this question; needless to say the conversation between the two ended rather quickly.

University philosophy in the 1970s/College of Basic Studies

For the first few years of Dr. Kushner’s tenure on campus, many people including President Allen perceived USF as being “Harvard on the Gulf.” During the early years of USF, a College of Basic Studies became a central focus of the university. At the time, the sentiment was that for the first two years of study, all students would be required to take courses in the College of Basic Studies before being accepted into their major program of study. Dr. Kushner also remembers that in the 1970s, the university’s schedule of classes had a picture of both students and faculty sitting under one of the few trees on campus. Having many opportunities to meet faculty in the College of Basic Studies, Dr. Kushner noticed that the percentage of Ph.D.’s within the college, was considerably low. Quick to point out that in the 1970s, the percentage of professors with Ph.D.’s overall was much lower than it is today, many of the faculty in the College of Basic Studies made claims for “universal knowledge” and considered themselves authorities in their major fields of study. In addition, they frequently published in rather small and obscure journals. Furthermore, Dr. Kushner could not understand why introductory courses in anthropology could not be part of the core curriculum for students in the College of Basic Studies. Overall, Dr. Kushner felt that the university and the department of anthropology needed a lot more years to develop. “It was the weather and [Dr.] Waterman that brought me here.”

Dr. Waterman passes

In part to Dr. Waterman's notoriety, Dr. Kushner decided to come to Florida and work at USF. Ironically, only a year after Dr. Kushner began his career at USF, Dr. Waterman passed away in the fall of 1971. "He died in a bar with a sandwich in one hand and beer in another and a story on his lips...he was just a wonderful great guy. Dr. Kushner had an opportunity to "sit under his feet" for a short time and learn about anthropology. In those days, Dr. Waterman insisted on teaching his courses at night. As the most senior person in the anthropology department, he was not required to teach at night.

Dr. Grange

Once Dr. Waterman passed, Dr. Kushner felt that the department did not have a great deal to offer him. However, Kushner is quick to point out that Dr. Grange, another faculty in the anthropology department, was extremely knowledgeable, and like Kushner, received his Ph.D. from Arizona.

Anthropology at USF—early in comparison to other disciplines

Anthropology was part of the social sciences curriculum and was established as a program early in comparison to other disciplines at USF. The early origins of the program can be traced to Bob Fuson, who was chair of geography and had been trained as a cultural geographer at Louisiana State University. Fuson insisted that USF initiate an anthropology program; he was also responsible for hiring anthropologists and creating a department.

Early faculty in the anthropology department/diversity

In the 1970s, there were only a handful of anthropologists working in the department, and most did not have Ph.D.'s. There were several women who worked in the department including Rachel Bonnie (went on to pursue a Ph.D.), and Evelyn Kessler, who received her Ph.D. from Margaret Mead.

Courses offered

According to Dr. Kushner, many of the first courses that were taught in the department were rather strange. At the time, there were no single comprehensive introductory courses available. There were two courses offered at the sophomore level, one was a "Cook's Tour" called World Ethnography "which I think all too often provides opportunities for grand-standing professors to titillate students who used to be 'titillateable' by the way. I am not sure they are presently." Thinking that he would only be here a few years, Dr. Kushner thought that if he had an opportunity he would change some of the curriculum; the following year he did.

Dr. Kushner becomes chair, 1971

In 1971, after being chair of the department for six years, Dr. Grange stepped down from the position; Dr. Kushner would become the new chair the following year. After only being at USF for two or three months, Dr. Grange asked Dr. Kushner to come into the archaeology lab with Dr. Waterman. Physically maneuvering Dr. Kushner into the corner of the lab, Dr. Grange told Dr. Kushner that he was going to be the "Chairman" of the department the next academic year. While declining the offer and trying to move out of

the corner, Dr. Waterman pushed Dr. Kushner back in the corner with his belly and once again, Dr. Grange said to Dr. Kushner that he was going to be chair. Rather than the traditional nine-month faculty appointment, Grange noted that the chair position was a twelve-month appointment. Needless to say, Dr. Kushner accepted the position as chair of the department.

Dr. Waterman's fieldwork in the local community

Prior to his death in 1971, Dr. Waterman conducted a lot of his fieldwork in the local Tampa community. He played bass and did fieldwork in the community in urban jazz. In terms of his appearance, Dr. Kushner describes Dr. Waterman as having a large stomach and a long, thin, white mandarin mustache.

Dr. Kushner initiates changes in anthropology department

One of the first things that Dr. Kushner did as chair of anthropology was to complete a massive overhaul of the core curriculum, including courses that fit his ideas based on his previous experiences at Arizona, Houston, and Brockport (former institutions he had worked). He created a single introductory level course at the sophomore level, one course in each of the four branches (archaeology, linguistics, cultural and biological); today most anthropologists recognize applied as the fifth branch of the discipline. Electives coming out of each of the four branches were also offered. Students were required to take all four introductory courses in each branch, courses in at least two of the four branches, and a senior seminar course.

Senior Seminar course

When Dr. Kushner was looking at coming to USF, he immediately noticed in the course catalog that students were required to take a senior seminar course within the department; this was a required course in most departments. Thinking that this course was a "brilliant idea," Dr. Kushner renamed it later on, "Rethinking Anthropology." Sadly as Dr. Kushner notes, in those early days at USF, most departments viewed the senior seminar as being "wasteful," and discarded the course rather abruptly. In speaking with many chairs in other departments on campus, Dr. Kushner could not understand the negative response to the idea of offering seniors who were ideally in their graduating semesters, the opportunity to take a course and review student experiences through the curriculum. Through the senior seminar, graduating students could contemplate for example, what anthropology was at the beginning of their academic introduction of the discipline, to now at the end, reflect on what they had learned through a comprehensive study of the discipline. Questions were posed such as: Why study anthropology? Why did anthropology exist? Should the study of anthropology continue to exist? What was the role of students in the study of anthropology? "Senior seminar was an incredible joy, which I still remember." The majority of students came into the course "with such passion." In fact, the course was written up in a higher education publication called *Change Magazine*. That year the magazine wanted to write an article on "wonderful courses" and asked professors to send in their nominations; Dr. Kushner nominated a course called the History of Theory, which was being taught by Dr. Michael Angrosino as well as the senior seminar course. Ultimately, the magazine selected the senior seminar course which Dr. Kushner taught and gave it major media coverage by

sending a reporter and photographer to the USF campus. Twelve people usually enrolled in the course and were “passionate about really trying to come to terms with what they would be doing with anthropology and why.” Unfortunately, in recent years, Dr. Kushner has noticed a decline in students and their passions in truly wanting to understand their particular discipline.

Instructors for courses in the four sub-fields

When Dr. Kushner came to the department in 1970, there were really no professors who could teach courses in the major sub-disciplines of anthropology. Once he became chair in 1971, Dr. Kushner went to the dean and explained to him that the department needed to have coverage in all of the four fields; the dean agreed with Kushner’s plans and a physical anthropologist and linguist were hired. Previously, the department did not have specialists in these two areas of anthropology. Although he moved on to student affairs, the physical anthropologist that Dr. Kushner hired in 1970, Dr. Curtis Weinker, remains at USF. The linguist that was hired, Dr. Smith, retired from the department about a year ago. Once Dr. Kushner had all of the sub-fields taught by a specialist, the courses made more sense. Two archaeologists took turns teaching the archaeology course, while the remainder of the faculty in the department was made-up of cultural anthropologists.

Anthropology students—1970s

The decline of students’ motivation in academia began to take place in the mid 1970s, according to Dr. Kushner. To his delight in speaking with other colleagues, Dr. Kushner was not the only professor to experience an overall decline of passion among his students. “Something happened around 1974-’75-’76; students came to college far less capable with the English language, less capable with reading and understanding, less capable of writing.” Along with this decline, Dr. Kushner noticed that many of his students chose to study anthropology after having read a *National Geographic* and wanting to “hang out with savages for awhile.” Prior to the mid 1970s, Dr. Kushner feels that “people really wanted to figure out what it meant to be human and see through sociology and psychology for the shams that they are in trying to figure out what it means to be human. In the early 1970s, the department had students who lived in urban communes in Tampa. “Everyone was scruffy including me, my hair was down to my shoulders, I had a beard, and I played the guitar. Of course the kids from the communes were even scruffier--they were just great. They looked like hippies looked in those years, and they read, my God did they read. They read widely, they wrote, they talked - these were the people who would not let me get through my introductory course and would often say ‘What are you talking about?’” To Dr. Kushner, these students [from the urban commune] represented in a sense, what the college experience was supposed to be about. The first four-to-five years at USF were great and similar to the experiences that Dr. Kushner had had in Brockport and in Houston.

USF offers the first M.A/Ph.D. in Applied Anthropology in the U.S.

Prior to 1974, the anthropology department only offered a B.A. in anthropology; in 1974, the department began to offer an M.A. in Applied Anthropology, the first program of its kind in the United States. In addition, USF was the first to offer a Ph.D. in Applied Anthropology. After 1974, many other institutions began to offer a masters degree in

anthropology, but not in Applied Anthropology. “We were the only M.A. in Applied Anthropology however.” Erve Chambers, who was hired at USF while Dr. Kushner was chair of anthropology, left to go to Maryland and started an M.A.A., a Masters of Applied Anthropology. Dr. Chambers thought that the M.A.A. (Master “of”) designation rather than the M.A. (Master “in”) designation would make the degree sound more professional; Dr. Kushner agrees with Dr. Chambers’ sentiment. Of the first five Masters in Applied programs developed, they utilized all of USF’s proposal materials.

Creating an M.A. program in anthropology

The entire structure of the M.A. in Applied Anthropology is laid out in an article written by Dr. Kushner in *Anthropology for Tomorrow*, ed. Bob Trotter. In 1972, the USF anthropology department was told that they had produced a “sufficient number of B.A.’s” to be eligible to begin applying for an M.A. At the time, anthropology was the only department in the college not to offer a master’s degree. One of the ways deans count their accomplishments is by the number of M.A. and Ph.D. programs offered. After receiving the news that the department was eligible to apply for an M.A., Dr. Kushner went to the faculty who immediately stated that they did not want the department to offer a master’s degree. In terms of jobs, the market was rather “dead” and if anything, many faculty members thought the department should offer a Ph.D. although this idea was questionable at the time. Not satisfied with the committee’s answer, Dr. Kushner asked if there was another kind of masters, besides the traditional Masters in Anthropology, that USF could offer. Ultimately the committee came up with the idea of offering a Masters in Applied Anthropology, which would not only focus on application, but would produce people who could make use of their anthropology training other than in the field of teaching. The notion of “practicing anthropology” had not emerged from the literature yet. “We wanted to train people to get jobs.”

Internship component of M.A. in Applied Anthropology

In addition, the department wanted to offer a required internship which students would take part in for one semester and then produce a thesis. “The internship would be placed in the context of applied anthropology.” Not only would the internship allow the student to read and think about anthropology while taking part in the experience itself, but also the student would receive supervision from the sponsoring agency as well as a faculty member. Therefore, the internship did not necessarily have to take place within the local Tampa community. Rather than creating an internship for each student, the main goal was for the student to assist in a real problem that the agency needed help with. Along with the internship a coordinator position was established to aid students in the location of internships, work with the agency and students, and create a project that would have to be approved by a students’ internship committee as well as the sponsoring agency. Dr. Kushner was the first coordinator of internships. Initially the department thought about requiring the supervisor of the sponsoring agency to sign a proposal with the student, but ultimately decided against this policy and instead, had the student, the supervisor and faculty read and agree to the terms provided in the proposal. Very simply, the proposal stated the beginning and ending dates of the internship, a description of the internship, and would include a report, which would be written by the student and given to the agency several weeks before the completion of the project. The final report to the faculty

of the anthropology department would be a thesis that would require the student to demonstrate their knowledge of literature as well as proper writing skills. Interestingly enough, the majority of masters programs offered at USF, did not require their students to complete a thesis in order to receive a M.A. degree.

Proposal for M.A. in Applied Anthropology

It took about a year for Dr. Kushner to submit and prepare a proposal for a Masters in Applied Anthropology to the dean of the college at USF; every faculty member contributed to the proposal. During the 1970s, the rules for submitting a new master degree program included sending the document to all of the departments in the state university system that offered that program in order to receive comments. It turns out that after reading Kushner's proposal, someone at the University of Florida wrote several brash comments about the program. "Who needs this [program]? Who ever heard of this? This [program] is not important, it is a waste of resources." After receiving these particular comments, the person at the Board of Regents who was charged with collecting all of the data called Dr. Kushner and laughed while reading these particular statements. In addition to these statements, the Board of Regents member commented that Ned Spicer, who was then the president of the American Anthropological Association (AAA), wrote of Dr. Kushner's proposal that "at last someone is going to do this [initiate an M.A. in Applied Anthropology], it's wonderful, what a great idea, this will surely be replicated and finally get anthropologists formally into the workplace making use of their skills." There was also a letter from William Foote Lyte, incoming president of the American Sociological Association, who after reading Kushner's proposal, said that he was going to devote his time to encourage sociological departments around the country to adopt similar programs. Dr. Kushner was invited to several anthropological associations meeting including AAA and Society for Applied Anthropology (SFAA) to present his proposal. In the end, the Board of Regents and USF accepted Kushner's proposal and after about ten years of offering the program, it seemed logical for the department to begin pursuing a Ph.D. degree; this degree program began officially in 1984.

Assumed purposes of M.A. and Ph.D. in Applied Anthropology

After all these years, Dr. Kushner is unsure of whether the M.A. or Ph.D. programs in Applied Anthropology, have "stuck to its assumed purposes." With the goal of the M.A. to complete practical projects and the Ph.D. to train practitioners to teach anthropology, Dr. Kushner felt that the department's curriculum could not adequately prepare students to teach authoritatively on the discipline itself.

M.A. internships

Students were mainly interning at planning agencies (both city and planning) during the early formation of the internship component for the M.A. degree. After Dr. Kushner, Dr. Alvin Wolfe has remained the coordinator of internships for the past thirty years (retired spring 2003). Medical agencies were also sites where USF anthropology students interned. Today, the majority of the senior people working in the planning agencies throughout Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pinellas, Manatee, and Pasco come to Florida from outside the state.

1970s campus sit-ins and demonstrations

Dr. Kushner recalls that there were some sit-ins and demonstrations on campus that were organized by one of the undergraduate majors in the anthropology department. One particular demonstration on Fletcher and 30th street (now Bruce B. Downs) was so “massive and thick” with students, that emergency vehicles including ambulances, had trouble entering local hospitals. The local media picked this up and reported that the “kids are such pacifists but they would not let in ambulances.” Dr. Kushner did not really pay much attention to the demonstrations although students occasionally brought the matter up in class.

Making anthropology visible to USF and the larger community

“There was so much to do at the time when the department was young, I really felt personally responsible for making damn sure that anthropology was very visible on the campus.” Thus, every time a master’s student completed an internship locally, Dr. Kushner would make sure to highlight (on campus) contributions made by students to the neighboring community. Additionally, faculty were also required to serve on community boards and committees as a means of demonstrating that if faculty could be helpful, so too could USF anthropology students. In those days, all faculty members were required to perform some form of community service, however, most did not take this obligation seriously. Dr. Kushner felt strongly that if the anthropology department took community service seriously, local agencies to which anthropology students were conducting internships, would respond to the needs of the department with sincerity rather than just obligation. “The notion of the student intern was not a thing that was very hot then except in social work which required interns, but they [social work] came after us as I recall. Faculty went out all over the place and paved the road for interns.”

Dr. Kushner becomes associate dean part-time/lack of community service among other departments

About a year after assuming the position of chair of anthropology, Dr. Kushner accepted the position of associate dean part-time; his time was split between the chair of anthropology and associate dean. Through his associate dean responsibilities, he discovered that there were many departments within social science that did not have anything to do with community service. Furthermore, with increasing positions on university committees, Dr. Kushner found that people particularly in natural sciences, did not even know how to define community service. The idea of the holy trinity of teaching-research-and service did not exist according to Dr. Kushner, except for faculty within the department of social and behavioral science.

University-wide opinion of anthropology

Essentially, definitions of anthropology to non-anthropologists in the university were extracted from two sources: *National Geographic*, which was credited with attracting many anthropologists in the field, and second, undergraduate courses. Some even remember and point out names like Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict or reading about the “non virtuous Samoans.” “It was just kind of weird, anthropologists...ooh...naked ladies.” Once the master’s degree was offered, many community members queried Dr. Kushner about what anthropology had to offer to “real work in the real world.”

Journal of Practicing Anthropology begun at USF

Along with the master's degree in Applied Anthropology, another note of distinction for the department was that it began to publish a journal entitled, *Practicing Anthropology*. As part of an NIMH grant that Dr. Wolfe wrote, the anthropology department would host five scholars a year for five years. In particular, the department wanted to invite anthropologists who supported the idea of an applied program. Sol Tax was one of the anthropologists who came to USF and also gave a public lecture, which was then published in the journal, *Human Organization*. While he was at the university, Dr. Tax concluded that anthropology was always about training people for employment and that even if one did not become an anthropologist, people trained in the discipline were incorporating anthropological elements into various professions. Because of Dr. Tax's lectures, the department began to contact former alumni and ask them how they were using anthropology. "In time, this effort became the notion of a journal called *Practicing Anthropology at Work*." Bob Wolf a faculty member in anthropology initially came up with the original title, however the department felt that the title "did not fit," hence the journal was named *Practicing Anthropology*. The Society for Applied Anthropology gave USF's anthropology department \$10,000 to cover costs for the production of the journal; Erve Chambers became the first editor of the journal. "The phrase "Practicing Anthropology" has to be located here since we [USF department of anthropology] created it. We created an idea of a practicing anthropologist." Dr. Kushner recalls fondly that every time the phrase "Practicing Anthropology" would be mentioned in a publication, he and other faculty members would look for the footnote, which gave USF credit. Unfortunately, credit was never given to USF in those early days.

Chair and Associate Dean tenure

Dr. Kushner remained associate dean for seven years out of the fourteen that he was chair of the department; he was chair from 1971-1985 and wanted to remain in the position through the first year of the Ph.D. program. At the conclusion of that year, Dr. Kushner resigned as chair, took one year of leave and then returned to the department. He became associate dean about three years or so after accepting the position of the chair of anthropology. Dr. Kushner recalls that Tom Rench, the dean at the time who allowed Kushner to hire a linguist and physical anthropologist and purchase a van for the archaeology lab, called him into his office one day. Always disagreeing with dean Rench at chair meetings, Dr. Kushner was convinced that he was going to be fired. After arriving at dean Rench's office, Dr. Kushner was surprised to learn that he was being offered a part-time position of associate dean because the dean felt that Kushner could offer a counter perspective and help him to rethink issues. Dr. Travis Northcutt came in seven years later as associate dean; it was under Northcutt's leadership that the anthropology department received a master's and then Ph.D. designation.

Long career at USF

Initially thinking that he would be at USF for four to five years, Dr. Kushner remained in the university for twenty-nine years (fall of 1970-January 1, 1999). Typically a professor would remain at an institution until they received a promotion. "The good things in life are amazing to me." Dr. Kushner remembers being afraid that if he stayed in Florida for

too long that his kids would talk with an accent. According to Dr. Kushner, his friendships with colleagues, the “constant adventure” of the department, the creation and administration of an M.A., and the promotion of volunteerism, all were contributing factors that made him want to remain at the university. “I was always busy hustling, PR-ing the department on campus as well as in anthropology, at the American Anthropological Association, the Society for Applied Anthropology, and the Society for Humanistic Anthropology.

Change of tone and focus in the department of anthropology

After giving up the chair and returned to the anthropology faculty in 1986, it seemed to Dr. Kushner that the department changed dramatically. The Ph.D. program appeared to be only training people to become professors as was evidenced by the number of Ph.D. graduates going into teaching. Another change that Dr. Kushner saw was the employment of teaching assistants (TA’s). Prior to 1986, the department did not employ teaching assistants because the program was not training students to teach; Ph.D. students were now teaching introductory level anthropology courses. In 1986, the curriculum had not changed which meant that putting Ph.D. students into introductory courses would require them to not only learn about introductory anthropology, but also learn how to teach. In other words, the curriculum did not provide instruction for TA’s on how to teach. Furthermore, some of the internships and theses “were not really applied. They were not based on projects with which a real agency was engaged before the intern.” In those first years of arranging internships, the department really worked hard and struggled to make sure that anthropology students were going into various agencies to work and not merely “sharpen pencils or lick stamps on envelopes. It was supposed to be practicum.” As far as Dr. Kushner knows, there are not any other Ph.D.’s offered in Applied Anthropology. Currently, there are fewer than forty-five graduate programs in anthropology still in existence. One reason for this decline is that deans and vice presidents often look at anthropology departments as being like other departments and therefore, treat it as they do other programs. For this reason, Dr. Kushner points out the need for the anthropology department to get out and talk to higher-level university personnel about the importance of the discipline. “It seems to me that I was always so busy, hustling.”

Final thoughts

Recently speaking at Dr. Travis Northcutt’s memorial service, Dr. Kushner recalls that he “Could not wait to get up in the morning and come to work. I loved coming to work in the department. There was always stuff to do, there was always a vice president to badger about more money.” During the 1970s, psychology was considered a big famous department on campus. Knowing that “We [anthropology] were a better department,” Dr. Kushner was always lobbying for the program. “It was my period as chair, fourteen years of perpetual excitement and activity.” Overall, he is very grateful, grateful for all of the excitement. “None of this excitement would have occurred without friends and colleagues and good people in the community as well. So there is a lot more than just sunshine here.

End of Interview