

Sierra Club Oral History Project

THE SIERRA CLUB AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT:  
SAN FRANCISCO BAY CHAPTER INNER CITY OUTINGS

Patrick Colgan	"Just One of the Kids Myself"
Jordan Hall	Trial and Error: The Early Years
Duff LaBoyteaux	Towards a National Sierra Club Program
Marlene Sarnat	Laying the Foundations for ICO
George Zuni	From the Inner City Out

and

SIERRA CLUB OUTREACH TO WOMEN

Helen Burke	Women's Issues in the Environmental Movement
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With Introductions by  
William Futrell and Jorge Paz

Interviews Conducted by Students in History 290a, Spring 1979  
Willa Baum, Instructor  
University of California, Berkeley

Sierra Club History Committee  
1980

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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## PREFACE

### The Oral History Program of the Sierra Club

In fall 1969 and spring 1970 a self-appointed committee of Sierra Clubbers met several times to consider two vexing and related problems. The rapid membership growth of the club and its involvement in environmental issues on a national scale left neither time nor resources to document the club's internal and external history. Club records were stored in a number of locations and were inaccessible for research. Further, we were failing to take advantage of the relatively new technique of oral history by which the reminiscences of club leaders and members of long standing could be preserved.

The ad hoc committee's recommendation that a standing History Committee be established was approved by the Sierra Club Board of Directors in May 1970. That September the board designated The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley as the official depository of the club's archives. The large collection of records, photographs and other memorabilia known as the "Sierra Club Papers" is thus permanently protected, and the Bancroft is preparing a catalog of these holdings which will be invaluable to students of the conservation movement.

The History Committee then focused its energies on how to develop a significant oral history program. A six page questionnaire was mailed to members who had joined the club prior to 1931. More than half responded, enabling the committee to identify numerous older members as likely prospects for oral interviews. (Some had hiked with John Muir!) Other interviewees were selected from the ranks of club leadership over the past six decades.

Those committee members who volunteered as interviewers were trained in this discipline by Willa Baum, head of the Bancroft's Regional Oral History Office and a nationally recognized authority in this field. Further interviews have been completed in cooperation with university oral history classes at California State University, Fullerton; Columbia University, New York; and the University of California, Berkeley. Extensive interviews with major club leaders are most often conducted on a professional basis through the Regional Oral History Office.

Copies of the Sierra Club oral interviews are placed at The Bancroft Library, at UCLA, and at the club's Colby Library, and may be purchased for the actual cost of photocopying, binding, and shipping by club regional offices, chapters, and groups, as well as by other libraries and institutions.

Our heartfelt gratitude for their help in making the Sierra Club Oral History Project a success goes to each interviewee and interviewer; to everyone who has written an introduction to an oral history; to the Sierra Club Board of Directors for its recognition of the long-term importance of this effort; to the Trustees of the Sierra Club Foundation for generously providing

the necessary funding; to club and foundation staff, especially Michael McCloskey, Denny Wilcher, Colburn Wilbur, and Nicholas Clinch; to Willa Baum and Susan Schrepfer of the Regional Oral History Office; and last but far from least, to the members of the History Committee, and particularly to Ann Lage, who has coordinated the oral history effort since September 1974.

You are cordially invited to read and enjoy any or all of the oral histories in the Sierra Club series. By so doing you will learn much of the club's history which is available nowhere else, and of the fascinating careers and accomplishments of many outstanding club leaders and members.

Marshall H. Kuhn  
Chairman, History Committee  
1970 - 1978

San Francisco  
May 1, 1977  
(revised May 1979, A.L.)

#### PREFACE--1980s

Inspired by the vision of its founder and first chairman, Marshall Kuhn, the Sierra Club History Committee continued to expand its oral history program following his death in 1978. With the assistance of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, awarded in July 1980, the Sierra Club has contracted with the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library to conduct twelve to sixteen major interviews of Sierra Club activists and other environmental leaders of the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time, the volunteer interview program has been assisted with funds for training interviewers and transcribing and editing volunteer-conducted interviews, also focusing on the past two decades.

With these efforts, the committee intends to document the programs, strategies, and ideals of the national Sierra Club, as well as the club grassroots, in all its variety--from education to litigation to legislative lobbying, from energy policy to urban issues to wilderness preservation, from California to the Carolinas to New York.

Together with the written archives in The Bancroft Library, the oral history program of the 1980s will provide a valuable record of the Sierra Club during a period of vastly broadening environmental goals, radically changing strategies of environmental action, and major growth in size and influence on American politics and society.

Special thanks for the project's later phase are due to Susan Schrepfer, co-director of the Sierra Club Documentation Project; Ray Lage, cochair of the History Committee; the Sierra Club Board and staff; members of the project advisory board and the History Committee; and most importantly, the interviewees and interviewers for their unfailing cooperation.

Ann Lage  
Cochair, History Committee  
Codirector, Sierra Club Documentation  
Project

Oakland, California  
April, 1981

## VOLUME PREFACE

This volume of oral history interviews on two of the Sierra Club's outreach programs, Inner City Outings and Outreach to Women, is the result of a happy junction of purposes, an instructor of a graduate seminar in oral history in search of a field experience for the class, the Sierra Club History Committee in search of interviewers to document the Club's history, and a small group of highly motivated students who chose to work well beyond the usual requirements of a seminar in order to produce primary historical source material on a subject they deemed socially valuable.

The seminar, "Survey of Oral History," convened in April 1979 with a brief ten weeks to select, research, interview, and process an oral history project, just one of several field assignments. The instructor was familiar with the work of the Sierra Club History Committee, having served as a consultant to its oral history program since the committee's inception, and had recently been informed enthusiastically about the Inner City Outings program by Peter Perkins, California photographer and historian. So the Inner City Outings was one project among several presented to the class as a possible class project, and it was the one chosen by the class. Ann Lage, co-chair of the Sierra Club History Committee, provided a list of leaders of ICO and a bibliography of background material on the Sierra Club that could be used for preparing questions, and described briefly how the Sierra Club interviews were carried out. The class debated and selected a representative group of interviewees and participants. Richard Simonds, Coordinator for Educational Media Laboratory, instructed the class in tape recording techniques and arranged practice sessions in the Education Department's Media Lab so that each student could interview and be interviewed on videotape; the tapes were later critiqued by the class.

Ann Lage, representing the Sierra Club, sent a letter of invitation and explanation to each prospective interviewee. From there on, each student prepared the questions for his or her interviewee, set up and conducted one interview, transcribed the tape, lightly edited the transcript and returned it to the interviewee for review, and prepared an index and interview history. These tasks took more than the ten weeks of the quarter, and it is a year later that the transcripts are finally all in, final typed, and ready for presentation to the Sierra Club at its annual meeting. Final details of the volume were handled by Ann Lage.

Willa Baum  
Instructor, History 290a  
Department Head, Regional Oral  
History Office

April 1980  
Department of History  
University of California, Berkeley

## INTRODUCTION -- The Sierra Club and the Urban Environment

The Inner City Outings program demonstrates the secret of Sierra Club success. It combines an idealistic program with good physical fun. The real impact of Sierra Club witnesses for Mineral King and for Grand Canyon over the years has come from the forcefulness of testimony with two strands--the strand of intellectual, even spiritual, commitment to stewardship of natural beauty, combined with the strand of the keen excitement of outstanding outdoor adventure. Club members share with their fellow club members Ansel Adams, Wallace Stegner, and David Brower the joys of being artists, writers, and philosophers to protect the American earth. Club members individually and in groups are in that outdoors, enjoying and exploring. Sierra Club members testify so convincingly about these areas because they have had both feet on the ground there not long before. This combination of the ideal and the real is the heart of the Sierra Club experience.

In the 1970s, Sierra Club groups spread across the United States and membership grew into the hundreds of thousands. Club programs broadened to include protecting the environment from cancer-causing substances and stopping highways routed through city parks. Today, we find most Sierra Club members living in cities. Some city chapters, such as the Angeles Chapter, number more than 20,000 members. These club members have a long history of involvement with urban environmental problems. They have tried to achieve Sierra Club goals--green areas, clean air, clean water, safe energy, proper land use--in an urban setting. They have worked to establish the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. In their campaigns, they have reached out for new allies, new friends. They have sought the active cooperation of city residents, women, labor unions, businesses, and minorities.

And being Sierra Club people, they have always had the joy of the outdoors as part of their message--and outings as part of their program. The Inner City Outings program started in the California chapters but has now spread across the country. It seeks to develop inner city residents' abilities and capacities to experience the out-of-doors by taking them along, up to the mountains, and showing them what Sierra Club people know best--the way to the outdoors. The Inner City Outings program is an outreach program to community agencies and to inner city residents, but it is also fun.

The program is one which acknowledges the inter-relationship of social and environmental needs. But all the talk of social action fades away with the reality of the outdoor experience. The Inner City Outings program is a challenge, in keeping with the words Nancy Newhall wrote in the Club's first Exhibit Format book (This is the American Earth):

Of all resources the most crucial is man's spirit.  
Not dulled, not lulled, supine, secure, replete, does Man create,  
But out of stern challenge, in sharp excitement, with a burning joy.

John Muir told us to "climb the mountains and get their good tidings."

This is the tradition out of which the Inner City Outings program comes  
and which it continues.

William Futrell  
Sierra Club Director  
Urban Environment Task Force Chairman  
February 26, 1980

## INTRODUCTION -- Bay Chapter Inner City Outings Program

The Sierra Club Inner City Outings Program is the new way for young people from the inner city to learn that the world is more than asphalt and concrete. Every year ICO provides the opportunity for youth to discover and learn about the beauty and challenges of the world, acquire the skills necessary to enjoy them safely and learn more about the natural world.

For a long time the Sierra Club has organized wilderness outings as a way of environmental education. Through our program, knowledge and leadership are available to community agencies, schools and churches, neighborhood youth groups, rehabilitation centers and clubs that want to develop outings for their members.

ICO will furnish whatever is needed to start an outing program--not only leadership skills but orientation materials, including slide shows, loaner backpacks and sleeping bags, and sometimes even funds for food and transportation. Though our ICO program is locally controlled, financial support comes from the community, and the national Sierra Club.

Our ICO trips are designed to meet the children's needs and make use of nearby natural areas--city and county parks, state parks, and federal public lands. Working with program leaders, kids learn how to plan a trip, use the necessary equipment, set their own course and plan and prepare their own meals. One of our key points is "teamwork". After a while many agencies can continue outings without our aid.

Nationally the program reaches many youths and adults every year, but our demand from young people wanting to be in our program is greater than our present resources can meet.

Jorge F. Paz  
Inner City Outings Leader  
East Bay  
May, 1979



Sierra Club Oral History Project

Patrick Colgan

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CHAPTER INNER CITY OUTINGS:  
"JUST ONE OF THE KIDS MYSELF"

An Interview Conducted by  
Colleen A. Dunlavy

Sierra Club History Committee  
1980

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Donated Tapes Collection  
Sierra Club History Committee

Sierra Club  
530 Bush St.  
San Francisco, CA 94108

We, PATRICK BRENDON COLGAN and COLLEEN ANN DUNLAVY,  
Narrator Interviewer  
do hereby give to the Sierra Club for such scholarly and educational  
uses, as the Sierra Club shall determine, the following tape-  
recorded interview(s) recorded on APRIL 27, 1979 as an  
date  
unrestricted gift and transfer to the Sierra Club legal title and  
all literary property rights including copyright. This gift does  
not preclude any use which the narrator may want to make of the  
information in the recordings himself.

Patrick B. Colgan  
Signature of Narrator

P.O. BOX 273  
LA HONDA  
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Name and address of Narrator

Accepted for the Sierra  
Club by

Ann Lae  
Chairman, History Committee

5-25-79  
Dated

4/27/79  
Dated

Colleen A. Dunlavy  
Signature of Interviewer

COLLEEN A. DUNLAVY  
2414 TELEGRAPH AVE. #306  
BERKELEY, CA. 94704  
Name and address of Interviewer

4/27/79  
Dated

SIERRA CLUB INNER CITY OUTINGS  
Subject of Interview(s)

## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Patrick B. Colgan was an early and influential member of the Sierra Club Inner City Outings project of the San Francisco Bay Chapter. He was interviewed by a member of a graduate history seminar, "Survey of Oral History," at the University of California, Berkeley, taught by Willa K. Baum of the Regional Oral History Office. The seminar group interviewed a cross-section of Inner City Outing members and participants as a class project aimed at documenting the formation, evolution, and nature of the organization.

## Conduct of the

Interview: Mr. Colgan was interviewed on 27 April 1979 at his home overlooking the tree-covered, rolling hills of La Honda, California. His wife and children were absent during the interview; the only other attendants were the family's several dogs and cats. The interview, some two hours in length, was conducted at the kitchen table and was interrupted only for a short coffee break and picture-taking session on the patio. Mr. Colgan's amiable and pleasant demeanor greatly enhanced the informal nature of the interview.

## Editing:

The typed transcript, with several deletions made by the interviewer, was sent to Mr. Colgan. He clarified several portions of the text, adding information where necessary but otherwise leaving the transcript intact as received. Mr. Colgan returned the transcript promptly with the following comment: "...one thing which seems to be eliminated and which should be illuminated is that the Inner City Outings program was (and is) composed of a host of other individuals who made an even greater contribution of their time and energy...Without their ongoing support ICO would not be."

Colleen A. Dunlavy  
Interviewer  
10 November 1979



"JUST ONE OF THE KIDS MYSELF"

Introduction

Dunlavy: This is an interview with Patrick Colgan, a Sierra Club member who was instrumental in shaping the Sierra Club's Inner City Outings project during its formative years in the early 1970s. We are in the kitchen of Mr. Colgan's residence at La Honda, California. This is April 27, 1979, and I am Colleen Dunlavy.

I imagine that it (George Zuni's name) came from Ann Lage.

George Zuni

Colgan: Okay. George is a little, young fellow; he's about 17 or 18. He's an Indian, a Hopi Indian from Arizona, and he's a most interesting young man.

Dunlavy: Did he go on some of your trips?

Colgan: Yes. Well, Jorge Paz and I work together still, even though I'm not officially involved with the Inner Cities Program any more. I still work with the leaders, and we go off and do a lot of fun things, and we meet a lot of kids. So the process is still going on.

George Zuni is one of the kids. As a matter of fact, I'm getting some funds from the Morley Foundation to sponsor a campership for George Zuni on my Sierra Club national outing, which I'm doing this summer.

Dunlavy: Those are the longer ones--people from all over the country?

Colgan: Right. I run Juniors trips, and every year I try to get inner city young people--a couple, anyway--on the trips. This year I'm also going to try to get an inner city leader. In other words, there's a problem with, I guess, integrating the Sierra Club fully with Third World or minority communities. You really can't ram it down their necks. Either it happens or it doesn't happen. But I think you can encourage situations to develop by your own efforts. So I bring inner city kids on my trips and try to get inner city leaders involved in the national Outings Leadership program. It's not something that happens overnight--it takes time.

Dunlavy: I guess primarily what we're wondering is if he's going to be easy to interview.

Colgan: Oh, yes. He's a very intelligent young man--superintelligent. I mean, he scares me, that kid's so bright sometimes, and he has this way of seeing things and conceptualizing situations and people's roles and whatever. Will you be interviewing him?

Dunlavy: No. Another one of my fellow students.

Colgan: They'll really enjoy George Zuni.

Dunlavy: That's good. Another thing--I was wondering when your Life Experience Portfolio papers were written?

Colgan: Last year. I had written those for this Bachelor's program and the Life Experience Portfolio: what you do is you do an outline of yourself and say, "This is what I've done with my life," and then you write a whole bunch of papers saying, "This is what I learned from specific experiences." I wrote a whole gob of them, touching on all kinds of things that I've done over my 41-odd years on earth. It was a lot of fun writing the Life Experience Portfolio. A learning experience for me, too, to look back in perspective and say, "Now, what did I learn from this experience?" It would be a good thing for people to do; if they chose to do that, they'd learn a great deal about themselves. And I guess that's what life is all about--more awareness, more learning. All I ask for is wisdom, nothing else. I don't care about riches or anything else--just wisdom, just the power to size up a situation for what its real worth is. That's most elusive. (Laughs.)

Dunlavy: I'm sure it is.



Jorge Paz

Colgan: So anyway, Jorge Paz (Sierra Club leader and community leader) works with Fremont (Senior High School, Oakland, California). Jorge is a little guy; he's a Spanish-speaking Cuban refugee, and he wants to be the John Muir of the Latino people. He is really the proof of the pudding that Inner Cities is working, in my estimation. Because here you have a minority group person who is really active in Sierra Club programs, outings, and so forth. This little fellow is just so full of vitality and energy and never stops. And he goes on backpack trips every weekend.

Dunlavy: He's what you would call a community leader?

Colgan: Well, actually he's both.

Dunlavy: He's a member of the Sierra Club?

Colgan: He's a member of the Sierra Club, yes, a card-carrying member of the Sierra Club, and an ICO leader. He's a previous chairperson, as a matter of fact. He held that for about a year and is a community leader as well; he's got his own group. He's got this pick-up truck with a camper on the back, and he just crams it full of kids and backpacks and off they go. (laughs.)

Dunlavy: Sounds great.

Colgan: It is. I envy him; I wish that I could get away as often as that--sometimes, I wish that.

Additional Personal Information

Dunlavy: I think the information that you have in your Life Experience Portfolio is quite complete. That was very interesting to read. There were a couple of things I did want to ask you--one, your full date of birth, just for the record.

Colgan: October 26, 1937.

Dunlavy: Okay. And do you happen to know offhand where your parents were born and the date?

Colgan: In Ireland. I don't know the dates--I don't know my mother's and father's birthday. In Ireland, in County Offaly, and I was born there, too.

Dunlavy: What were your parents' names?

Colgan: Peter Colgan and my mother's maiden name was Clancy. Molly is her first name, Molly Clancy. I was talking to her last night, as a matter of fact.

Dunlavy: So they're still over there?

Colgan: No, as a matter of fact, they all live over here. They emigrated as well, and they're living in New York.

Dunlavy: They emigrated at the same time as you did?

Colgan: No, they came later; about a year or so after I was settled in this country, they came, which is quite a courageous thing to do because they weren't young anymore. My sisters have all married and all our family is back on the East Coast in Jersey and Washington, D.C. And I'm the West Coast representative.

Dunlavy: What about your brother Leo?

Colgan: My brother Leo is still living in England. He was in Africa for a while there. He's a big wheel, that man; he's done very well for himself. He's gotten into communications and he works for the GPO (General Post Office) in England. He was head of the communications project in Africa, establishing some kind of communications radar network for the British government and the government of Ghana.

Dunlavy: And he's still doing that?

Colgan: He came back in October and he's living in London. He might come out here next year for a visit. I haven't seen him for twenty years.

Dunlavy: I was going to ask you if you'd been back since you wrote the Life Experience Portfolio papers. In there you said you hadn't been back in seventeen years.

Colgan: Yes, I went back last year as a matter of fact. Last summer my wife and I and our young son, Sean, went back.

Dunlavy: When did your sisters come over here?

Colgan: They came before me, actually; they came in late fifties. They were living in the Bronx, I guess.

Dunlavy: They came together?

- Colgan: No, they came separately. We all came in ones and twos, dribs and drabs.
- Dunlavy: Did you come to America mainly because they were here?
- Colgan: I wanted to just go; I wanted to go travel and go places and do things, and, I guess, experience as much as I could. I figured I've only got three score years and ten, maybe four score years and ten--who knows; and in that short space of time, I wanted to cram in as much living and experience as I possibly can. I came to a screeching halt when I came to the West Coast as far as travelling was concerned, because I found a lot here that really appealed to me. And I've stayed here now since 1962 on the West Coast. I found that I can learn a lot more, experience a lot more by staying in one place. But I had to travel to find that out.
- Dunlavy: You learn different things, I guess.
- Colgan: So, I hope I'm not talking too much and wasting your time.
- Dunlavy: No, not at all. The degree program that you were in at the University of San Francisco--you're still in that now?
- Colgan: I still need a whole bunch of units to graduate, and I'm going to have to go back fulltime at USF to get my sheepskin union card.
- Dunlavy: What would it be in?
- Colgan: Well, I may even change my major. It was a business administration program that I was signed up with IPD, the Institute for Professional Development. I think I would rather get some kind of a credential in counseling. I'm about to get a job with an organization known as Holeman, Inc., up in Hillsborough.
- Dunlavy: Holeman?
- Colgan: Holeman, Spencer Holeman is a guy who has a state license to operate foster homes, and he's going to offer me a job. He has offered me a job--I'm working for him right now, sort of gradually beginning to develop a job training, job placement program for culturally and economically deprived young people. So it's still the same kind of thing I'm in.
- Dunlavy: Maybe we should get into the Inner City Outings program a little bit.
- Colgan: Okay.

Entry into the Sierra Club

Dunlavy: From the papers you gave us, I gather that you were in the Sierra Club for a number of years before the Inner City Outings program started. How did you first come to join the Sierra Club?

Colgan: Let's see. I first got involved with the Sierra Club because I wanted to be with people who could teach me how to backpack and enjoy the outdoors. When I first came to California, I saw what a lot of recreation lands there are over here. I was doing some backpacking and hiking; I guess my former wife was with me at the time, and we weren't doing it very well. I figured we could utilize our time and energy to a greater advantage if we know what we're doing.

So somebody says, "Join the Sierra Club or at least go with them on some of their trips." So I did. My whole motivation was to see how they do it and then I'll go do it myself. And it just so happened that I ran into such a fine bunch of people that I stayed with them. All my friends, anybody I know who's any kind of a meaningful relationship to me in a friendship, is a member of the Sierra Club and has a backpack. It was a lucky accident, you might say.

Dunlavy: Is that how you met Peter Perkins?

Colgan: Yes. The annual Snowshoe Section dinner or something was up at some brewery in San Francisco, and I had gone along to this dinner. Peter was there. I thought I knew everybody in the room--I thought I knew him, too--and I was talking to him like we're old buddies and been on trips and done all kinds of things, but he didn't know me from Adam. (Laughs.) All of the sudden I realized this, so I said, "What the hell difference does it make?" But we struck up a really good friendship, and we began to go off and do a lot of trips. His lady friend, Shirley Ewing--I don't think I mentioned her in the papers...

Dunlavy: Yes.

Colgan: Oh, I did?

Dunlavy: Somewhere in there, yes.

Colgan: Okay. We did a lot of really neat things in the mountains: backpacking, peak-climbing; God, it's like all those experiences run together into one long, glorious summer day. That's how the relationship started.

Dunlavy: When was that?

Colgan: I guess way back in the late sixties--'69 or '70. Yes, about 1970. I guess anybody I met in the Inner City Outings, anybody who was involved with me in the Inner City Outings program--I sort of generated a lot of enthusiasm for the program. Anybody I was associated with, I sort of drew them into it, just to see what they could do and what they could get out of it. There was a big turn-over of people; it was not for everybody. But some people really got off on it, and some people are still involved in it.

Genesis of Inner City Outings Idea

Dunlavy: Where did the idea come from; when did that start?

Colgan: The idea for the Inner City Outings was already in existence when I got involved in it primarily. It was a pilot project that was the brainchild of the GGNRA, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and the Sierra Club. The Bay Chapter wasn't involved in it; just the Sierra Club, proper. You know how the Sierra Club's broken down into different chapters all over the country. Then there's one head office which is like the national Sierra Club. Well, they were the ones who were negotiating with the GGNRA, but they were composed of Bay Chapter people anyway, so it really wasn't that much difference. The whole objective was to sort of demonstrate the need for more recreation lands in the Bay Area, especially for young people from the inner cities. So, they'd go over to Point Reyes and Mount Tamalpias and all those little parks that are scattered around there. I guess President Nixon was appropriating money to buy lands to amalgamate all these parks into one. I guess you know about that? It's one of the nicest things he ever did.

Dunlavy: Really? I'm glad to hear that.

Colgan: He got all that money, and the land was bought. I wasn't too enthused about going on day hikes to Mount Tamalpias with a bunch of kids. I didn't really dig that at all. I figured I'm going to be rather bored with day hikes. We would go up to the high country with these kids and that's what they're going to do. They're not just going to have a mild picnic on Tam. We'll expose them to survival in the wilderness--give them a dynamic life-learning experience.

Entry into Inner City Outings

Colgan: How I heard of the Inner City Outings was through a lady called Olive Bavins. Len and Olive Bavins live in San Francisco, and they're leaders in the Bay Chapter Knapsack Section--very good friends of mine. They're the ones who sponsored me into leadership in the Bay Chapter in the first place. They're like my mentors. Len is a plumber from England, and Olive is from Canada--really great people.

Anyway, Olive said to me one day--she just sort of dropped it--that poor Marlene Sarnat's having one hell of a time with her Inner City Outings. I said, "Who's Marlene Sarnat, and who's Inner City Outings?" And she said, "Oh well, they need people to lead hikes and things like that," and some other remark, a bit of conversation about it. But the thought was implanted in my mind--this sounds interesting, I'll go.

So I called up Marlene Sarnat--she was the current person in charge of it. She's a chemist; she was working over at Syntex Laboratories here in Palo Alto. I said, "My name is Patrick Colgan, and I heard that you had an outings program for young people and that you need people to help." And she said, "Well, what can you do?" So I said, "Well, I lead backpack trips for the Bay Chapter, and I'd like to lead a backpack trip." She said, "When would you like to lead a backpack trip?"

I was sort of getting in then; she was making me commit myself to something without even really knowing what I was doing. So I said, "Well, I'm going off for a week in the mountains with some friends of mine; when I come back, why don't we plan it for maybe the following weekend." It wasn't giving it a lot of time either to arrange anything. She said, "Fine, okay," so we pinpointed the date. She said the name of the group would be the Paltenghi Youth Center on Belvedere Street and Waller Street.

Dunlavy: That's Jim Larkin's group?

Colgan: Yes. So she said, "You go over there and just talk to Jim Larkin and tell him that I sent you, Marlene, and that--do it." So that's how I got involved, that first trip.

Dunlavy: What kind of trips were they doing before you got involved? Just the day trips?

Colgan: As far as I know, Marlene had done some backpacking. Marlene was not a really good leader, and she had run into some serious

Colgan: problems with a group that she was working with in Chinatown. As a matter of fact, while I was away on my trip in the mountains that week, she took a backpack trip up to Loch Levan Lakes with some kids from Chinatown, and there was a death on the trip. A kid got drowned, and it was very, very sad. But it was never resolved as to how that kid drowned, because he was a good strong swimmer and the water was shallow, and it was warm. I don't know; the whole thing just was really bad.

Dunlavy: Did that put a damper on your upcoming trip?

Colgan: No, I went back to the same place, as a matter of fact. But Marlene was not a really, she's not a leader. She's a great administrator...Marlene was a superb administrator. I was a good leader. Together we made an excellent team.

The way the program had been set up prior to my getting involved in it, the kinds of people who were in it were Bay Chapter people, and they were all organization people. They're not really good trip leaders, and I saw this immediately when I went to one of the meetings.

Like when I came back from my trip to the mountains and before my first Inner City trip took off, there was a meeting over at her house and all the people involved in the pilot project were going to be there. I went over there and I took a look at them; they're the hard core of Bay Chapter organizers. You know, they're middle class, upper-middle class, that have the time, the leisure, to involve themselves in great effort for worthwhile causes. But in something like this, they didn't understand a thing about inner city living and ghettos. Not that I did either, but I could see that I didn't, and I could see that they couldn't see that they didn't.

I took that responsibility upon myself to make that decision\* and I don't think I was mistaken. Because none of those people are around anymore anyway. All the people who subsequently became involved in Inner Cities were not your traditional Bay Chapter Sierra Club type of individual. Am I making sense? ICO was to grow from this point on.

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\*My decision was that I was going to make a total effort to develop ICO from my point of view and that there were few people in that meeting who would be any use to me. Marlene Sarnat was the only one. I would really need her. It was a gut level instinctive feeling.--PBC

First, Disastrous Trip with ICO

- Colgan: With all this in my mind, I went off and did the trip. I guess I wrote about it in those papers. It was a disastrous trip.
- Dunlavy: Danny?
- Colgan: Yes. It was a disaster. God! Do you want me to talk about that here, or is what I've written about it sufficient?
- Dunlavy: Well, if you have anything more to add to it.
- Colgan: No, I think I said it all there pretty plainly. We just did not know what we were doing; we did not prepare those kids. Peter Perkins and Shirley Ewing and I and a few other people, friends of ours--it wasn't the kids' trip, it was our trip, and we were laying it on them. We thought that they would be so grateful to us for exposing them to this alternative experience. But it was the stupidest thing that you can possibly do--take these kids right from Belvedere and Waller Street on a Friday night and maybe they've had something to eat, maybe not. And maybe one of them has been to the beach or something or--well, no, that's a little too much. All of them have been to the beach, but very few of them have been away on any kind of overnight trip away from their family. We took them up to Tuolumne Meadows; it's 10,000 feet up in the air, in the high country, with snow-capped peaks and glaciers and lakes.
- Dunlavy: Do you think your experience growing up in London, the problem you had being accepted by the gangs, increased your ability to bridge that gap?
- Colgan: Yes, I certainly do. I think that rough upbringing that I had gave me a lot of understanding about what it's like. But the cultural differences I had no idea about at all. None whatsoever. I still don't fully understand differences in the cultures, and I don't pretend to, but I'm a lot more aware that there are differences and there are things you can do to work with the people from different cultures. You're not going to take a guy from Hunter's Point, hard-core black, whatever, inner city youth and turn him into a backwoodsman, Sierra Club type, outgoing conservationist. It's not going to happen, except in rare occasions it's happened.

But my growing in London with all the problems I had was very instrumental, I would say, in helping me survive, period, in this life.



Dunlavy: So after that first trip, you went and thought about it?

Colgan: Yes, then we thought about it, and we sort of re-evaluated what our objectives were and our points of view and so forth.

### Early Days of ICO

Dunlavy: Who was "we"?

Colgan: Peter Perkins, myself, and other people who were involved with us at the time--Shirley Ewing, a gal called Saskik Thiadens, a fellow called Gordon Stewart--gosh, hordes and hordes of names; they all escape me. Really great people and also a lot of people from the Bay Chapter Leadership Program who were still leaders and who were good friends of mine, who I had done a lot of neat things with over the years. I got them interested in it; simply because I was in it and they were friends of mine, they came along. But they were not--after their first trip with, say, a bunch of kids from Inner City, they knew damn well that this wasn't their bag.

One lady, a Sierra Club person, threw up--got sick--because she had been eating the food from the same pot that the kids had been eating in. They had some bug that she wasn't used to, and it's really different how the cultural differences can manifest themselves. She went behind a rock and threw up--vomited all over the place. Not only that, she was standing still the whole time at the campsite. She stood still for about three hours without moving, because it was so different for her, the activity of the kids and the things they were saying, things they were doing. She had never in her life been exposed to that and didn't know what to do and didn't know what to say. So she threw up. (Laughs.)

Well, she came out and said it: "Look, I'm wasting my time; I'm wasting your time. I'm not going to be a leader in the Inner Cities program. It's just not my bag." A few others did the same thing. I got a lot of reaction from people in the Sierra Club, some of it quite controversial, and it bears interpretation.

One fellow who was a fairly high ranking individual in the national outings program, good friend of mine, said to me, "Look, it's great what you're doing with the Inner City program; it's really first class, wonderful, but there's no need to bring these kids to the high country. They won't appreciate it." Because I was getting quite good at this and

Colgan: a lot of trips were going out, more leaders and so forth. It wasn't at all uncommon to see a bunch of ragged-looking ruffians up at some really neat roadhead, all yelling and cussing and smoking dope. And there were all these Sierra Club types, horrified.

So, I was told, "Don't bring them to where the other Sierra Club people go. Bring them down to the foothills and to National Forests where they won't bother anybody." So I thought that was a lot of horseshit. (Laughs.)

But I could see their point of view also, in another sense. What this person was saying to me was that you shouldn't bring them up here right away; they're going to need to be indoctrinated. What we actually did finally was, if we were working with a new group, we would have a whole bunch of indoctrination, like pre-trip meetings. Then the ideal situation would be to take them on a day hike, you know, to get them used to working around outside. Then we'd take them on an overnight camping trip to some state park where they'd be camped out in a grove of trees and there'd be a garbage can nearby and there'd be an outhouse nearby and there'd be a Forest Service ranger going around in a truck. You know, some semblances of civilization. And then gradually get them into the high country.

I love the high country. I want to go there immediately; I don't want to hang around the city or go into the state parks. I want to drive my car, drive for six hours, all night, 2:00 a.m., go to sleep, wake up at 6:00 a.m. and see this panorama of high country, mountains and lakes and forests and glaciers, all around me; and that's what I want. But with the kids, you couldn't do that.

Dunlavy: Quite a transition to make.

Colgan: Yes. And I guess our whole emphasis in those days was that we really believed that the format we were developing--two Sierra Club leaders, two community leaders, and up to ten young people--was the ideal trip set-up. It was good. We had a nucleus, a pool of equipment, backpacks and sleeping bags and utensils and stoves and stuff and some money.

Dunlavy: This was all before it became an official activity section of the chapter?

Colgan: Yes, yes. We got...

Dunlavy: What did that mean that it wasn't an official activity section?

Colgan: We didn't have any say-so in what went on within the chapter, at this time. It was just a pilot project; we were more or less a dangler on our own.

Colgan: We were eventually incorporated into the Bay Chapter as an activity section so that when you get the little book, the Bay Chapter book, you open it up and it lists all the activity sections in there. Inner City Outings is in there and there's a representative from each activity section who goes to the activity meeting. You see, they can get their input; they can put in what they want.

Then, apart from the activity committee, there's another group that's called the Ex-Comm, the Executive Committee of the Chapter (elected by chapter members). The Executive Committee interfaces directly with the national outings program of the Sierra Club proper.

So this really is a member-oriented organization. The input from the various sections on trips, whether they be day hikes or bike trips or scuba diving or whatever they're doing, they all have their particular point of view, and they put it through their activity section representative into the activities committee into the Ex-Comm into the national outings program, as well as write articles for the newspaper, as well as attend other meetings and so forth.

Dunlavy: So before it became an official activity section, you were just on your own?

Colgan: Just on our own, yes.

Dunlavy: Providing your own funds and your own equipment?

Colgan: Well, let's see. The bus camping section gave us some money. I forget how much; it was quite a bit of money. I think it was five hundred dollars. Coleman camping equipment people gave us a load of sleeping bags and backpacks.

Marlene was handling all the fund-raising, but I didn't care what she was doing or, you know, whatever, as long as there was money there when we needed it. I guess becoming a part of the activities committee, becoming an activity section within the chapter, and Marlene leaving the program, and my taking it over all happened at the same time.

Dunlavy: That's when you went from field co-ordinator to chairperson?

Colgan: Right, yes.

Dunlavy: When was that?

Colgan: About 1971, I believe. I'm not sure of the dates; I think it was '71 when it became an activity section within the chapter.

Dunlavy: Not 1976?

Colgan: Oh, no.

Dunlavy: Not that late?

Colgan: No, no, no, something else happened in 1976. It became part of the National Outings. These are all the historical...

Dunlavy: Guideposts?

Colgan: Yes, as regards its development. That was to come much later; the National Outings was much later. Getting in as part of the chapter activities was quite a jump, quite a step.

It also meant that it was set up then that we could get leaders directly from the knapsack section. We were more or less a knapsack group of our own because all we did was backpacking. Of course, now it's a little different; they're doing all kinds of things. They're doing river touring and all kinds of stuff, biking and stuff. So the Inner City Outings encompasses every kind of activity that all the other activity sections do.

#### Early Sources of Trip Leaders

Dunlavy: So where were you getting the leaders before that?

Colgan: Okay, anywhere I could find them. We had very, very high standards for leadership. Not anybody could be a leader. We soon found out, and they soon found out, whether they could do it or not.

If someone said they wanted to be a leader, we said, "Fine. But first you've got to be an assistant leader--before you get this glory plum to chew on, being dubbed a leader." Big deal. But it's nice to have something like that, to have a title; it means a lot. So you don't get x amount of dollars in your pocket, but something else: you're a leader. And people look to you as being the one in charge and so forth and make decisions. It can help you; it helped me.

A classic example of how I got some people: I was co-leading a national trip with a gal called Susan Kollings. Susan Kollings was also involved in the Inner Cities program.

Dunlavy: Here?

Colgan: Yes. She's in Berkeley somewhere now, I think. She used to work down at the Fish Grotto in Berkeley. I lost touch with her.

She and I were going a national trip in the Sierra, and one of the people got altitude sickness. He got very, very severe, what was coming to be pulmonary edema. Are you a backpacker at all? Do you know anything about?

Dunlavy: No, but I was looking through the handbook you gave me and it mentioned pulmonary edema.

Colgan: Okay, it looks like pneumonia, and the one thing that will cure it is to get down off the high country. So in the middle of the Sierra is a big long canyon, Kern Canyon, and we were on the east side of Kern Canyon with a group. I sort of took this guy down to the low country, there on the Kern Canyon. But it's in the middle; there's two big ranges of mountains. We had to get back up and over and down to get out.

So we were in the middle of this canyon and we spent a couple of days down there. While I was there I met a guy called Steve Baigle. I met two people--I forget the other guy's name--Arne somebody or other. Both of them became leaders. Steve Baigle became a first class leader with the section. Our trails crossed in the middle of the woods and we sat down...

Dunlavy: They weren't members at the time?

Colgan: No, this guy was living in Los Angeles. He was a student and he was going to leave Los Angeles and move up to the Bay Area and live in Marin, go to school in Marin, Marin College. Then he says he could be a leader. I said that's great, fantastic. He went on his way to finish his trip and I finished my trip. When we got back, we contacted each other and he began to come to the meetings. He went as a trainee leader, an assistant leader, and began to lead his own trips.

Another time we had about twenty or thirty people at a leadership training seminar up at Peter Grubb Hut, which is a Sierra Club hiking hut on the northern Sierra. It's used mainly in winter for ski touring and snowshoeing. Anyway, there was work party fixing up the hut while we were using it for the leadership training seminar. There were a couple of guys working on the roof of the hut. One of them was a captain in the Navy, and he joined our group and became a leader. (Laughs.) He was a member of the Sierra Club and permanently based at Mare Island or Vallejo or someplace there. I can't think of his name, damn it; his name is lost to me. But the guy who was in charge of the work party was really pissed off at him because he came over to our group, and he thought we were really

Colgan: a neat bunch of people and all that. So then we pitched in and did some work on the hut ourselves; then we all became one group.

But that's how we worked; everywhere we'd go, we'd generate a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and attract people. We'd attract the ones who wanted to be attracted--not the ones who would do it out of a sense of duty, (with) that (attitude): "Gee, we've got this Sierra Club program, what are we going to do with it, maybe I'd better..." you know--or because they were my friends, like Sierra Club leaders, coming to help. We just got other kinds of people: younger people, people with an alternate point of view, different lifestyle, a little on the hip side, people like that.

We were a very, very controversial organization within the club because many of the groups we worked with were drug prevention and drug rehabilitation programs. Kids in the inner city and booze and dope and crime and pimping and whoring and all the rest of it were synonymous. Here you were with these elitist, middle-class, Sierra Club type people and this tremendous contrast. Things happened along the periphery that caused some concern.

#### Problems on Trips

Dunlavy: What kinds of things?

Colgan: Well, let's see. Mainly booze and dope and stuff like that.

Dunlavy: On the trips?

Colgan: Yes. One of the biggest mistakes I ever made was trying to organize a knapsack trip. I was leading a knapsack trip, and I billed it in the schedule as being half inner city (people) and half Knapsack (Section people). I got about a dozen inner city kids, and I got about a dozen Sierra Club leader-type people, and we all went off on a trip together. It was the most god-awful experience. Is that written about in the papers?

Dunlavy: I think so, if that was the only one. There's one mentioned in there, I think maybe in the child psychology paper.

Colgan: God, it was a disaster. It really was awful.

Dunlavy: Is that the only time you tried that sort of thing?

Colgan: No, I tried a couple of other times. One time we had some kids-- I had three kids with me, and we went up to Feather Falls with

Colgan: another Sierra Club group. The kids didn't dig these people at all. They were so alienated from them, so far removed from them. The kids got into ripping the people off because they were good at it; they were really good. They knew how to get peoples' attention here, and the other guy could get into the pack and phttt! (Laughs.) And I didn't realize what was happening until too late. So we had some scenes at that level. People got their stuff back and I was left--you know, I had responsibility and stuff like that. And that kind of thing was bad.

If I bring inner city kids on another person's trip where I wasn't the leader, that was okay. It would work to a point, provided they didn't steal off them. But in each case, the leader of the trip and a lot of the trip members felt put out by the attitude of the kids. They'd say, "Well, look, he doesn't want to talk; he doesn't want to be with us. Screw them." But the kid was feeling, "Those goddamn honkies over there, who the hell do they think they are, feeling so goddamn superior and whatever." So it was a two-way thing. I finally gave up on that.

Dunlavy: You never had one that went very well with a mixed group?

Colgan: Well, now I do. Now I do. The way we do it now is Jorge Paz and myself--I'll run a chapter trip, backpacking or snowshoeing, and Jorge will go on it and bring a bunch of his kids on my trip. and it'll work just fine. We did one...

Dunlavy: How is that different from what you were doing?

Colgan: I don't know. I never thought it before now, but I guess we're more mellow. We're not so intense.

Dunlavy: Not trying to force the interaction so much?

Colgan: Yes, we're not trying to lay our trip on anybody. I mean the program is set up, it's working, it's functioning, it's ongoing. I'm not involved in any kind of responsible position so I can afford to just relax. I run a trip and if the kids want to go, great. If they don't want to go, that's even great too, but if they go, we seem to have a much better time. So in that respect, it's working.

Anyway, that's how we got leaders. Got them from anywhere.

Dunlavy: So then in about 1971 it became an activity section.

Colgan: Became an activity section, and I became first chairperson. I struck up a really good relationship with Cole (Colburn) Wilbur, who was head of the Sierra Club Foundation. Marlene would have

Colgan: to interact directly with him, because any money that was raised went into the Sierra Club Foundation. Then I set it up with him that we'd come and get money from him to run trips and that we initiated our own fund-raising efforts. All funds raised by our (ICO) efforts were deposited in a special account in the Sierra Club Foundation. We also had a special checking account in Wells Fargo and would draw from our account in the foundation and deposit in the special checking account to finance trips. I drew up all kinds of fund-raising letters and mailed them out all over the place. Money began to come in; we got money from all kinds of surprising sources.

One of our greatest benefactors was a fellow called Ed Daly who runs World Airways over in Oakland. He always gave us money; nice fellow.

#### Funding Sources

Dunlavy: Funds came from a variety of sources?

Colgan: Yes. Lots of local business and industries would contribute a hundred bucks, ten dollars, you know, anything. It was an on-going thing, money coming in. We wouldn't have one annual drive; we were always after money. I was after a couple of other things. I was after a large scale grant to fund the administration of the program, because I was working down at Stanford.

Dunlavy: What was your position with the section at that time?

Colgan: I was the first chairperson, still the chairperson. Yes, I was the chairperson of the section.

Dunlavy: Didn't that come later? Or am I still getting confused with that 1976 date? It seems to me I read that you were field co-ordinator for about three years, so that would have been while it was an activity section but before it became a national...

Colgan: Okay, well, somewhere in there the titles changed. Before it became part of the National Outings, and after it became an activity section, somewhere in there, titles changed from field co-ordinator to first chairperson.

Dunlavy: Oh, I see.

Colgan: I'm not quite sure what brought it about. I think we were told to do it by the Sierra Club activities committee, because we're a bona fide activity section of the club and these are the by-laws. These are the rules and regulations and you've got to conform to them. If you don't, somebody else will.



Dunlavy: So you were essentially in charge then?

Colgan: Of that little section. Yes, right.

Dunlavy: What happened to Marlene Sarnat?

Colgan: Got out of it entirely. Soon after that kid got drowned and I came on board, she just became an administrator. And I assumed more and more of the responsibilities of administrating from her because she was telling me she was sort of getting out of it. She was having a hard time from other people in the club, who had been more or less involved with the beginning. Way back in the beginning when it was still a pilot project, there was in in-house bickering and fighting going on with the people involved. And it was so stupid. This was destroying Marlene. Like some guy would call her up in the middle of the night and call her all kinds of names. I know the guy, too; I don't want to mention any names. It's so sad that that kind of thing had to happen.

Anyway, this was way back in the early days when I was just getting involved. So Marlene dropped out and all those other people dropped out and I don't know where any of them are. I think Marlene's over here in Palo Alto somewhere. I haven't talked to her for about three years.

Dunlavy: She's not in the Sierra Club at all anymore?

Colgan: She's still involved in the Sierra Club. Let's see, the last time I heard of her she was with a group called Friends of the River and doing a lot of fighting for the Stanislaus River. I think she's still with that, and she's also on the Sierra Club's anti-nuclear effort. She's involved with the local chapter down here in Palo Alto, the Loma Prieta chapter, and completely out of Inner Cities.

Dunlavy: You were going to tell me about the large grant that you were after about that period of time (1971).

Colgan: I was working at Stanford full time, and I was working at Inner City Outings full time. I was so involved with this program--it was my whole life, this was everything to me. I'd go to sleep with in on my mind; I'd mull it over in my sleep. You know how you do when you've got something on your mind? And you wake up, and it's the first thing on your mind? Well, that's how it was, because I was shaping it and developing it, and it was really the most important thing in my life at the time.

I was also encouraged by other people that maybe this was what I should be doing with my life anyway. But I should be paid for it. I shouldn't have to put in eight hours a day at

Colgan: Stanford, which was okay, you know. But they were right. So I went after big money to fund the whole administration: money for a salary for me, money for transportation costs, money for new equipment, equipment maintenance, money for food, money for administrative costs, and so forth. I drew up some proposals; I think there's a copy of one of the proposals (in my papers).

Dunlavy: Yes, there is.

Colgan: You can see how I didn't know a thing about what I was doing, really. I just took a common sense approach for what I thought a proposal should be like. It actually got me inside the door of some fairly interesting places. I met some very interesting people as a result of my fund-raising efforts.

Oh, by the way, before I got into the grant writing and proposal writing end of fund-raising, the slide film that we made...

Dunlavy: The Backpacker?

Colgan: Yes. That'd be worth seeing if you ever get a chance.

Dunlavy: They're still showing that same one?

Colgan: Oh yes. (Laughs.) It's shown every week, somewhere around the Bay Area, some school, some church hall, some youth club, or something; it's being shown, tonight, somewhere. Guarantee it.

Anyway, that slide show was shown at a businessmen's luncheon group somewhere. I think it was called Red Spur; I don't know who the hell they are. Anyway, there was a guy at the luncheon meeting; his name was Jack Moldenhauer. He had been somebody I had known years ago; I had helped him on a snowshoe trip. He'd gotten very ill, and I helped him into camp, set up his tent, and stayed with him to make sure he was okay because he could have died. And Mr. Moldenhauer showed up later on and became involved in our program as a fund-raiser. He was instrumental, together with this slide film, in raising quite a lot of money for ICO.

One day I got a call from the Sierra Club Bay Chapter saying there was a check there for the Inner City Outings for five thousand dollars, and it just blew me out of my tree.

Dunlavy: You weren't expecting it?

Colgan: No. Not at all. I couldn't believe it.

Well, let's see (how that relationship with Jack Moldenhauer started.) Marlene Sarnat called me up one day and said, "I want you to come over and meet somebody who says he can raise money for us." She says, "I don't know who this guy really is. He was at this luncheon and saw the slide film. He says, 'Name it; whatever you want.' and he can get it for us." I thought, great, let's go meet this guy.

So I went over for dinner at her place; she lived up somewhere near Diamond Heights in San Francisco. Peter and I were there and, I guess, a few other people. In comes Jack Moldenhauer who was the guy. I knew him from before on this other trip, in the snowshoe trip. Olive Bavins was on that snowshoe trip, and Jack was in serious trouble on it. He almost got pulmonary edema or hypothermia or the whole god-dam schmeer. I remember I helped him on that trip and it was the same guy that was going to be our fund-raiser.

So it just goes to show, you know, you meet people and you never know how it's going to come back--and do you in or do you good, one way or the other. It's always good to make sure that, when you meet the people, it's on a positive level because your relationship will be positive. If it's a negative thing you have going on, it will be negative. Bad things will come out of it.

Jack was an executive sales person for some steel company. I think it was Bethlehem Steel, and he still is. He was always calling on clients, big business, dealing with steel. When he was making his deal with them, he'd say, "By the way, here's a pamphlet. I'm also belonging to the Sierra Club Inner City Outings program, and they need money; if you want to donate tax-deductible." He had a good rapport with his clients, and money came in as a result of that. It was a really good source of money.

Dunlavy: That's the way he got the five thousand?

Colgan: Yes, business associations, business contacts. Another real lucrative source of equipment we had was with Eddie Bauer in San Francisco. They were on Kearney Street at the time. I forget how it happened, but I was in there talking to the manager of the store, and he said, "Well, look, we have all these seconds on equipment. We don't sell that because we don't want to have equipment go out with some kind of flaw in it with our label on it. We send it back to the manufacturer and have it remade, or we give it to our employees or something." So he said, "Why don't we give it to the Inner City Outings?" And I said, "If you do that, what we'll do in turn is take the actual cost of that piece of equipment and have its monetary

Colgan: value credited to your name as a tax-deductible donation in the Sierra Club Inner City Outings fund in the Foundation."

So we'd go down there every so often. We'd call up and we'd say, "What do you have?" And he'd say, "Well, I got half a dozen Eddie Bauer bags and some backpacks and some pots and stoves." We'd just do down there and pick up this really good equipment and bring it on back.

Dunlavy: Do they still do that sort of thing?

Colgan: I don't know. I would hope so. The manager's name was Bob Fell, and I don't know where he is now. He's not there anymore.

Dunlavy: Some of the other companies did that, too? Like North Face and Sierra Designs?

Colgan: I don't know if they did or not. Of course, nowadays, they have seconds sales; a lot of your big specialty shops will do a sale on seconds. They'll advertise it and there'll be a big mob of people out there at 3:00 a.m. in the morning lining up to get in and get these deals. So I think we more or less don't have that facility anymore.

The Loma Prieta Chapter had its Inner City Outings growing up the same time as the Bay Chapter Inner City Outings was growing up. I was working with those guys, too--a guy called Emilio Garcia, also a Cuban refugee. He's up in Sacramento now. But back in those days, I worked with Emilio a lot. He's a tremendous organizer--a real source of energy.

He did stuff like--Sherpa, the people who make the snowshoes. The Sherpa snowshoe costs about eighty dollars, and he got a load of snowshoes when they first came out for the Inner Cities people at less than cost. It was kind of a promotion for the snowshoe people and also a tax-deductible donation to the Inner Cities program. So I got a pair of those--for about forty-five dollars. It was a really great snowshoe. We use them for the leaders and for the kids on the trips.

Dunlavy: That was later, after they expanded the program to be more than just backpacking and got into the rivers and snow?

Colgan: Oh yes, sure. I still do a lot of winter mountaineering with the young people from the inner cities. I do it through the snowshoe section; I'll run a trip in the snowshoe section and at least half of it or even more will be composed of inner city kids. Jorge Paz will show up with his truck bursting with all these kids.

Colgan: Jorge usually gives them a good introduction to it. He's got them in the classroom, right there. He doesn't have to organize meetings someplace else; he's got them in the classroom. He'll have a course and the kids will get units for participating in this course. He'll give them a questionnaire as to what do you do when the situation occurs and so forth, so that their kids are really prepared for survival in the mountains in the wintertime. It's really good to work with those guys because they're experienced. Really super good kids. We have a great time.

So we had money, and we had equipment, and we had leaders teams working in a dozen or so youth groups throughout the city in the East Bay. We had a pool of equipment for the Bay Chapter in San Francisco, and we had another pool in the East Bay. It got to be that big. The leaders teams began to expand and people would come and people would go and so forth. It just became an ongoing thing.

#### Early Philosophical Conflicts within the Program

Dunlavy: When was the opposition strongest to the program, the political intrigue that you mentioned the other day on the telephone? Was that way back at the beginning?

Colgan: Way back at the beginning. It wasn't that it was so much opposition to the program but conflicts within the program.

Dunlavy: Of what nature?

Colgan: It's not clear to me what was going on. But it was differences of opinion as to how it should be run and what was its main emphasis. It was a political thing in those days; it was a political organization.

This is the way I saw it, when I was first involved. And I saw that the political motivations of the people involved with this pilot project were secondary to the young people being exposed to a wilderness experience. What I mean is, when I first became involved, the program was organized by bureaucrats rather than by the kind of grassroots outdoors person that later appeared. I set it upon myself to turn that around, that the prime effort would be to involve young people and teach them this alternate outdoor recreational, educational thing--get away from the streets, and that it's not all like you see it in the streets. It's much more.

Colgan: When you get a bunch of kids out in a group on a backpack trip in the high country, they learn so much more about themselves and what they can do and how they need each other. Although as far as needing each other, they were a lot more aware of that than I was, coming from the inner cities. Some of the groups we worked with were really hardcore inner city kids, and all they had was each other.

### Trip Stories

Dunlavy: They knew each well generally? I mean, personally?

Colgan: Right. One group in particular--Mas Vida, means "more life." They were part of the Mission Rebels. I don't think the Mission Rebels are in existence anymore. The Mission Rebels was like a central organization in the Mission District that got all kinds of money from federal and state and local governments to fund all kinds of programs. And they'd have different kinds of things going on--splinter groups, subgroups--who would get money from Mission Rebels and one of them was Mas Vida. It was a drug prevention program.

The kids were really interesting people and they really believed in "more life." They had this old clubhouse on Capp Street. The one thing that surprised me and took me quite a while to understand was that the adults in Mas Vida and the kids share one thing in common, in that they all smoke dope together. I couldn't understand that.

Dunlavy: They all did?

Colgan: Yes. They were a drug prevention program, but they'd all blow dope together, the adults and the kids. I guess, like the Indians and their pipe of peace, it sort of solidified their relationships. If the kids went off and did it in the corner, which they'd do anyway, and the adults would probably do the same thing in another corner, you'd have that tremendous gap in communication. Because the adults would be saying, "You can't do that; it's bad," but they were doing it, and the kids were doing it. So there was a kind of unwritten law that it became common for them all to do it together.

I remember being off on a trip with Mas Vida, and I had some of my friends from the backpacking section, knapsack section, on the trip with me. We were all sitting around the campfire and some adult pulled out his little plastic bag and another kid got out his papers, rolled a joint, passed it around. It came my way, I took a toke on it, and one of the

Colgan: big leaders in the knapsack section took a look at this joint, and looked at it, and looked around, and sort of took a quick puff and passed it on. (Both laugh.) It was amusing.

Dunlavy: Did you ever have any problems with drugs? You mentioned in your papers problems with pulling knives a couple of times.

Colgan: Yes, we had problems with kids getting really wasted. We couldn't control--couldn't search them, frisk them, and stuff like that. Some of the kids are pretty bad at that level. They'd have booze and dope and they'd get ripped out of their minds. That one story I wrote about there, that was quite a story.

Dunlavy: Which one?

Colgan: I talked about it a little earlier. I had a bunch of backpackers from the Sierra Club and a bunch of inner city kids. We were camped down at Vicente Flat in the Ventana National Forest. The kids pitched their dirty old see-through plastic tarp at one end and all got under it and the Sierra Club people put up their gerry tents and their nice expensive equipment at the other end of the camp. We recreated a social situation out in the woods.

Dunlavy: A little more starkly, I guess.

Colgan: Oh! Highly dramatized. There'd been a rule: no knives, no guns, no booze, and no dope on the trip; but when it came to the dope bit, there was a degree of flexibility. Grass was tolerated, but no pills and no smack, and no coke, or anything like that, or mescaline or peyote or any of that stuff. Absolutely no way. If I found it, I'd confiscate it, and I did. I told them that; the same thing with the knives.

Well, on this particular trip, the situation was getting a little out of hand. The kids were up under their tarp being really noisy. And these people down at the end of the meadow, the Sierra Club, elitist, middle-class people, were horrified and very subdued and really--humiliated by the noise from the other end. They looked to me to do something about it. I thought, "Well, hell, they're having a good time. What the hell. What am I supposed to do?"

I went up and I talked to them about it and I explained the situation as best I could. I said, "Why don't you just be cool about the noise anyway." And then at the same time a couple of kids had these great big knives, big machetes, and they were sort of hacking away at each other, you know. Big black dudes with bone iron hard heads. This one lady says, "Do something!" I looked at these two kids and I was scared.

Colgan: So I sort of sucked in my stomach, took a deep breath, and I went over and I said, "Give me the knives." And they fell over themselves in their enthusiasm to give me the knives.

It was like this was what they'd been wanting me to do. I'd made the rule, I'd made the regulation, and they were testing me--to see what I would do. I guess if I hadn't done that, I'd have lost a hell of a lot. Because it would have meant that so I make a rule, it doesn't mean anything. And they were intelligent enough to realize that. They were just saying to me, "Well, come on. What is the rule, where is it, where's it drawn, where's the line? See, they're over there smoking dope; what about the knives and the rest of it."

So I just demonstrated that I want the knives; they're confiscated. I'll give them back to you at the end of the trip. And I did.

Dunlavy: Were there ever any problems between the community leaders and the Sierra Club leaders on trips?

Colgan: No, not...

Dunlavy: That kind of thing didn't happen? It was usually...

Colgan: Not really. I had some problems with some Sierra Club leaders, women and black men. The Sierra women leaders objected to the black men calling them "Momma." (Laughs.) "Hey, Momma." They didn't like that. But I figured that's their problem; there's nothing I can do about that. That's the culture thing happening, and it's completely beyond my control. So I said, "Well, if you don't like him calling you 'Momma,' you tell him."

Dunlavy: In the "Project Direct Aid" article that you wrote, you discussed the training program that was being offered for community leaders. They'd go off on a trip, right?

Colgan: Yes. We had a structure set up for that to happen, and it did happen to some degree. But using the Bay Chapter Knapsack Section as a source of leaders was not as productive or as fruitful as we had hoped, for the reasons we talked about earlier. They just weren't that kind of people. But nonetheless, we had it set up that, if they wanted to, they could come into the program. I don't know if that's still in effect.

Dunlavy: Did they have any kind of formal training in group psychology, anything that would help them handle the cultural differences?



Colgan: No. Kind of a gut feeling. I guess, we could have taken a textbook approach to it and said this particular material contains a lot of valuable information that you might avail yourself of and read in advance, so that when you come as an assistant or trainee leader it won't be such a kick in the teeth to you, to see what happens. It might be a good idea to do that, but we didn't do it. Because the kind of people we got as leaders were capable of being a leader without that training. They didn't need it. Still don't.

But it's a thought; it's another angle that the program could pursue. I am now beginning to do that myself. I'm going to have to take courses in counseling. The job I'm going to be getting, I'm going to be reading--my wife is a great person for textbook approach to bringing up children. She's an engineer, and she reads all the textbooks. We have a kid who's supposed to be mentally retarded, my son Leo. She has a textbook approach to helping him and it's worked wonders. She's read a whole lot of stuff and I'm beginning to read it too, because it can really help me.

One of the things she's really into is this P.E.T. thing, Parents' Effectiveness Training, Teacher Effectiveness Training. It's invaluable stuff, but it doesn't teach you anything that you don't really already know instinctively as being human nature. It's just that the book brings it to the fore so you can see it and bear in on it.

And I guess that kind of exposure would be--but then again, you can get carried away with that. You can just have a textbook approach to any situation like you encounter. Say, "Hm. There's got to be a book on that. Let me read the book first." Then turn in a kind of automated, computerized fashion to applying the principles to situation without having a real feel for it. So there's got to be a balance.

I was successful in an unbalanced way, you might say; I didn't have the technical training. But I had really good results in working with kids. Like I said, now I'm going to start reading the books anyway.

Dunlavy: Why do you suppose you had such good results?

Colgan: I'm one of the kids myself. (Laughs.)

Dunlavy: I suppose that helps, doesn't it?

Colgan: Sure, I never really grew up. I'm still not grown-up. I don't know what grown-up means.

Colgan: I don't try to lay any kind of a trip on the kids at all. We're going to have a good time, primarily. We're going to be backpacking outdoors, roughing it, enjoying all kinds of weather, and if it rains, thunders, and storms, it's all part of the experience. So what. You'll dry off. When the sun comes out, you'll dry off, so don't worry about it. You're not going to die. Or maybe you will, I don't know. (Laughs.) But it's an adventure.

We had some really great times. My dirty old Dodge out there (in the driveway) has been in some outlandish places. One time we were leading a convoy of vans and cars into the Ventana, and my old Dodge was out in front. We came to the river there, and there's a ford across it. It had been raining for about three weeks, and the ford was partly washed out with sandbars. There's a big sign up; the military (Hunter Liggit Military Reservation near Jolon) said, "Road impassable." There's this roaring river, you know, and I knew there was a ford out there and I knew that my car could get across it. There was a couple of four-wheeled vehicles behind me, so I said, "Let's go!" We just revved up the engine and roared into the water and it came in around the floor boards, and I kept on trucking through. Got up to the other side and the kids all thought that was marvelous (laughter). So I looked behind, and there were all the other cars following me.

Dunlavy: They all made it?

Colgan: Yes, we got through. We went on up to the end of the road to our destination and went on backpacking in there and had the whole place to ourselves.

Oh, I could tell stories, go on and tell stories and stories, if that's what you want to hear.

Dunlavy: Well, I don't know. Maybe if we get past some of this other stuff. When the ICO finally did come under the jurisdiction of the National Outings subcommittee in 1976, what was the effect on the local chapter? You were still involved at that point, right?

Colgan: Yes. The idea behind the Inner City Outings becoming part of the National Outings was primarily for fund-raising purposes.

Leave me backtrack a bit. My own fund-raising efforts, writing proposals for grants and things like that, had met with some success. I'd met some pretty influential people. Kramer Miller Associates, they're a bunch of fund-raising consultants. They charge forty dollars an hour; at least, they were doing so then. They gave me a lot of hours free,

Colgan: helping me with my proposal. They were part of the Miranda Lux Foundation. Miranda Lux Foundation was giving out money to all kinds of organizations, but it was all seed money; these organizations and these efforts would eventually have to be able to be self-sufficient.

The Inner City Outings program couldn't do that. We don't have a product; there's no way we can have income. So the Miranda Lux Foundation and Kramer Miller were telling me that they couldn't give me seed money, because next year I'd be back for more and the year after that.

In addition to that, John Blum, with Kramer Miller--he was the boss man--he'd say to me, in a sense, "Well, who are you? We don't know who you are; you're just Patrick Colgan. Who are you, come in here full of piss and vinegar and enthusiasm and generate support for your worthwhile program? Great, but who are you? We don't know who you are." I couldn't understand what they were talking about. I was to find out pretty soon.

The proposal got into the Unified School District and I was working with a guy called Silverstein, (Albert E.) Silverstein. I don't know if he's still there or not, but he and I were working on a large scale grant from the Ford Foundation. Money was to come from the Ford Foundation for a joint project that would be the Sierra Club Inner Cities Outings and the school district, for all the high schools in San Francisco to go on outings. And I was going to be the person in charge. It was just great, just what I wanted--I thought. Later on I realized I didn't want that.

How I found out was kind of sad. I didn't like some of the things I encountered when I was working with these big guys and the Ford Foundation and so forth, the bureaucracy involved. What happened took the wind out of my sails quite a bit.

One day (Dr. Silverstein) said to me, "By the way, what's your degree in?" I said, "What degree?" He said, "Well, you know, you're going to be working for the school district; I need to know what your credentials are and all that." And I said, "Well, I don't even have a high school diploma." And that was the end of that.

He said, "We can't possibly talk to you unless you have a degree. In the school district you'll have to have some kind of a degree." So I said, "Well, that's a lot of rubbish, because I'm the only person who can run this program. Nobody else around who has the contacts, had the experience and the

Colgan: know-how to run it, except me." I said, "You can't put an ad in the paper; you can't write a job description and have somebody come in and fill it." I said, "The time is now. This is a unique situation." "Sorry, got to have your sheepskin union card." (Laughs.) So I said, "Screw it."

Dunlavy: That was the end of the grant proposal and everything?

Under the Wing of National Outings

Colgan: Yes; so then I figured, well, there's got to be more ways than one to skin a cat. And then Emilio Garcia was all for this National Outings thing. Now the Inner City--this is a Sierra Club project. The Sierra Club tends to say, "Well, it's nice we have an Inner Cities program; great, it's wonderful. And we can put this into our annual report; you know, the Sierra Club got this and that, this Outreach here and there." But they weren't giving us any real support from any of their own money. They weren't raising funds for us; we were doing it ourselves.

We felt that if we came under the National--no, they told us in order for the Inner City Outings to get money from the Sierra Club, it would have to come from the Sierra Club fundraiser. And he raises funds for national projects, so we said, "Let's make us a national project." Then the Sierra Club fundraiser, Denny Wilcher, can go out and, when he's raising money across the country, earmark a certain amount of money for the Inner City National Outings.

The need for this became even more apparent when other Inner Cities programs were springing up across the country. Baltimore has one, and I think Los Angeles has one.

Dunlavy: How did they "spring up?" On their own?

Colgan: On their own.

Dunlavy: Or because they heard about the Bay Area?

Colgan: They heard about the Bay Area one, and I guess similar efforts had been going on, and the whole thing like caught on at that time. And it really sprung up, but always the Bay Chapter and the Loma Prieta working together, a bunch of friends, were the ones who were the most effective, and dramatically so.

Dunlavy: Why?

Colgan: The San Francisco Area has traditionally been the source, the breeding ground for all Sierra Club ideals. John Muir started the club here. Conservation and preservation ethics (Sierra Club) were born here. Ansel Adams lives here.

Dunlavy: When did the Loma Prieta one start?

Colgan: Soon after the Bay Chapter one got going. Like I said, we'd work in cooperation with each other. I'd go down there and go to meetings and so forth and talk at meetings and show our slide film and go on some of their trips and help train leaders and stuff like that.

Emilio was always trying to pirate me to come--he says, "Well, look, you live in San Mateo; that is the Loma Prieta Chapter. How come you're doing all this work in the Bay Chapter?" I didn't have an answer. But I felt a loyalty to the Bay Chapter. I still do; all my friends are up there. Anyway, that's all by the by.

We pursued this course of getting money from the National Outings by having the National Outings take us under their wing. We got McCloskey--McCloskey's the big man (executive director) now, after Dave Brower--we got him and a whole bunch of other people, including Denny Wilcher, up in Mills Tower (on Bush Street, former Sierra Club National Office) one afternoon for several hours; and we lambasted them with our points of view and our wants and our demands. I guess they were a captive audience for the amount of time they'd allowed us, so they listened. Eventually we did become part of National Outings, and money is coming through. I'm not too sure of the structure because I stepped out of it soon after that.

There was another level of bureaucracy established. Representatives from the various chapter Inner City Outings programs formed a committee that was the Inner City Outings National Subcommittee. Sandy Knapp took over as chair after me. Then he headed the National ICO subcommittee. They would interface directly with the Ex-Comm which went into the Sierra Club Board of Directors.

Duff LaBoyteaux was at Mills Tower for that meeting and since then has been actively pursuing the development of a national ICO. Duff wrote to me recently as a result, and I just finished writing back to him, about the need to integrate the National Outings with more non-white faces. He asked me to help him in that, and I will, I'll help.

This trip I'm doing in July is a National Outings Junior Knapsack trip, and I've got a couple spots for Morley Fund

Colgan: kids. George Zuni might be one of them. My wife, Frances, may not be able to go, so I will need a co-leader and I'm asking Duff if he can get one from the inner cities, someone who's able and capable and experienced to be a co-leader with me. So it will happen.

Dunlavy: Do you think the funding is a major obstacle to drawing more non-white faces?

Colgan: No, because all those leaders are volunteers anyway. Is that what you mean?

Dunlavy: No, I mean--well, you mentioned that strategy of drawing non-white faces, as you call it, into it and then mentioned getting funding for George Zuni, and I wondered if you were connecting the two that closely.

Colgan: No, George Zuni will be funded by the Morley Fund. The Morley Fund is an old foundation that the Sierra Club picked up. The Sierra Club Foundation picked up the Morley Fund and administers it.

Morley was an old dude way back; I don't know too much about him, but he had money. When he croaked or died, passed on, he left money in a trust to be used for financing young people to have unique wilderness experiences. That's what this money is for, and he was a Sierra Club person himself.

The money was used, has been used a lot to pay for young people going on Outward Bound trips. You've heard of the National Outward Bound organization?

Dunlavy: Yes.

Colgan: A lot of money to pay for kids on Outward Bound comes from the Morley Fund. A lot of the times the kids who were going on those trips could have gotten the money themselves, and it seems to me that the Morley Fund money would be better invested in something like this.

So, specifically for National Outings, for inner city kids on National Outings, I work with Stu Dole and ask him to pay for inner city kids. Up to now, I've had no difficulty. I called him about three weeks ago; I hadn't spoken to him for a year. And within a thirty-second conversation, I'd gotten two camperships, and that made me feel pretty good. The rapport is still there, the contact is still there, and the mechanism is still there. So that's how we're going to do that.

Now, getting a co-leader for me on my national trip, I don't know how that's going to work. I'm out of touch with

Colgan: most of the communities. The only one I work with is Jorge Paz in the East Bay. He'd be a perfect co-leader himself, but his summer is all mapped out. He's going to work for YCC (Youth Conservation Corps); he's going to work for the Forestry Service in Sequoia or somewhere.

Anyway, I'm going to need a co-leader for my trip in July and I want to talk to Duff about that as soon as I get a chance. I've written to him, and I'll follow through with a phone call soon. So where does that bring us to?

Phasing out of ICO, 1976

Dunlavy: About 1976 when ICO became part of the National Outings-- that was also about the time you started to phase out of the Inner City Outings program?

Colgan: I phased out a little bit before that actually, about a year before that.

Dunlavy: Why was that?

Colgan: Maybe it was '76, '75 or '76. It was quite sudden and quite dramatic. I have three kids of my own from a former marriage, and my son, Leo, was classified as being mentally retarded and having emotional disturbances and brain damage and hyperactivity and all kinds of problems. His mother couldn't take care of him anymore, and she asked me to. San Mateo County was involved; they were saying, "Look, you two get your act together about Leo or we'll take him away from you." I couldn't let them do that, and she couldn't take care of him. Leo was in desperate straits so I took him to live with me. That took care of all my commitments.

Dunlavy: Yes, I suppose. Of course. You wouldn't be able to go off for a weekend.

Colgan: No. I took a long time to reach this decision to do this because I had so much going on. But after thinking it through, he came first. When you think about it, he's my own son. Then the more I began to think about, the more I figured: well, hell, this can be equally as exciting and learning for me as the Inner Cities. He can do as much for me and more, much more.

So that was the point of view I used when I embarked upon my decision to give up the chairmanship of the Inner Cities and gradually withdraw from participation. I couldn't just stop

Colgan: suddenly, although I made up my mind that I'm going to sever it right here and now; from this point, my involvement would be less and less and less. And I devoted my efforts primarily to Leo.

Then I got married to Frances--Cleveland is her name. I'd known her before, and when Leo was living with me, I guess I was more or less domesticated enough for us to pursue a relationship. She didn't want to charge all over the place all the time, either. So here we are.

Dunlavy: Is there anything else that you think should be added?

Colgan: Well, I'm mainly thinking of the people and the feeling of the Inner City Outings, and not the events that happened in shaping its history and stuff like that, but the people and the feelings is where I'm coming from. I just hope that with the input I've given you, you can get from that a good idea of what went on. I still keep in contact with as many of those people as I can.

Peter Perkins has gone on; he's writing books. He's become a noted Bay Area photographer and is writing books. Mary Em (formerly LaBoyteaux) married Jack Wallace, and Saskik is up in Marin someplace. She's a nurse. Shirley Ewing is studying for a doctorate in Boise, Idaho, working with educationally handicapped young people. We've all gone different ways, but we all still keep in contact.

The slide film, "The Backpacker," is still showing. If you get a chance to look at it--I guess you could call Duff LaBoyteaux if you wanted to see it sometime. If you can get some money, you can get a copy of it and put it into the archives.

Dunlavy: I wouldn't be surprised if they're probably considering something like that. That seems like the logical thing to do.

Colgan: Yes, it certainly does.

#### A Trip to Remember

Dunlavy: If you could experience one day over again in all your years of association with Inner City Outings, what day would it be?

Colgan: One day or one trip?



Dunlavy: Either one--something you'd like to relive.

Colgan: Gosh, there were so many really great trips. I could tell a dozen or so good ones. One that sticks in mind as being really a great trip for what we did and the feeling everybody had--I guess I was at my best--we went and climbed Mount Conness from the west side, up in Yosemite.

We had a group from Everett Junior High School (in San Francisco). Everett was one of my favorite groups. They were a mixture of gifted students; they were all really gifted, all sharp as blades. These guys really kept you on your toes; that was enough of challenge for me right there to work with these guys, because their I.Q.'s were way up there. I would take these guys on backpack trips. I did it for a couple of years. Saw them grow up and leave junior high and go on to high school and so forth.

On this particular trip with a bunch of kids from Everett, we drove up to Tuolumne, and we hiked up to Young Lakes. We had a magnificent storm that just really dumped all kinds of sleet and snow on us and then it blew off. The whole ridge with Mount Conness was lit up by alpen glow. Alpen glow is where the sun is going down, and there's a lot of stuff in the atmosphere like clouds or smog even...

Dunlavy: Ice crystals?

Colgan: Well, anything. Smoke would even do it; smog would do it. Sun's rays come through this atmosphere and then reflect on the rocks. They look like they're plugged in and they glow orange and red and yellow; every conceivable color of that level are in the rocks for about three or four minutes. It's really great, and all the kids were out there just going bananas. There was fall coloring in the trees, lots of fall coloring and all that was lit up by the alpen glow. So the alpen glow was very vivid in my memory; I'd like to relive that moment again.

Let's see, the next day we had some really great climbs. I took three kids on a class 3 climb up Mount Conness. Mount Conness is a fairly easy walk if you go the long way around. It sort of goes like this, then like that (gestures to indicate meandering route), and we went up the class 3 route up the face. We had a rope, we had crampons, and we were on ice and so forth.

I went up ahead with a rope on me and free-climbed up this particular pitch and sat up on top. I was dangling the rope down for one kid, Billy Burgess, and there was somebody

Colgan: else below him trying to help him climb up. I'd given him some instruction in climbing and all that.

So I'm sitting there, and I'm holding on to the rope. He couldn't quite do it and I couldn't see and there was all kinds of confusion going on down below. I said to him, "Why don't you just hang there and I'll drag you up." And he said, "Well, I am hanging here." (Laughs.)

So then I sort of tied the rope in and leaned over and there he was, just hanging there with his rope around him; it was about a two hundred foot drop below him.

Dunlavy: So you pulled him up?

Colgan: Pulled him up. We got up and then he looked at me and he says, "You are crazy! You are the craziest person I know." (Laughs.) I'd like to relive that again.

#### Unpleasant Trips

Dunlavy: Is there a time you wouldn't want to relive?

Colgan: Ah, yes. I think one of the worst times I ever had on a trip was--that particular trip I talked about a couple of times where the kids with the knives--that wasn't too bad. That was okay, but on the way out, the weekend had been a total disaster.

All the adults on the trip were totally pissed off with me. Some of those people to this day, their relationship towards me has never been the same. At the back of their mind is that I didn't get in and lay my authority trip on those kids as much as I should have. I couldn't--not that I couldn't, I didn't want to.

But on the way out, going down the mountain, it was kind of sick. Some of the kids threw their sleeping bags away (laughs) because their philosophy was that we don't need it now. We're going home; why should I carry this great big lump on my back anymore. So they tossed it down the canyon. One guy in particular was coming behind seeing all this, and he was going down into the canyon and picking them up and tying them on his back. He was the one who was the most adamant in his criticism of me, my relationship towards the kids. Here he was coming out with this huge load of sleeping bags and other equipment that the kids had thrown away. And he wouldn't leave it for any of us to pick up; he carried it all himself.

Colgan: It was kind of sick, like he was Jesus on a cross, martyring himself. I wouldn't want to relive that experience again. I still see that gent. I don't think he leads trips anymore anyway. But we were really good friends, up to that point. From that point, we still communicate, but there's always that gap. It's too bad. It really is. I wouldn't want to relive that situation again.

Let me see. Is there anything else? One situation I wouldn't want to relive again was dealing with a first-aid situation. I'd been with a group called Saint Kevin's Teen Club.

Saint Kevin's is a parish church out on Courtland Street in San Francisco and the pastor of the church was Jack O'Neil, a very good friend of mine. I think he's gone on to be the pastor of San Quentin right now. He used to be a butcher out in the Mission. He says he knows more about meat than he does about Jesus. A great guy.

Anyway, he used to come on the trips. He didn't come on this particular trip, but there was one kid who wanted to go-- Enrique Cardero. He came from Managua and he's always been helpful organizing trips for this group but he never went. I often wondered why he didn't go. I found out. He was an epileptic, and the kids told me not to take him.

He approached me one day; we were organizing one trip. We were going to leave the next night. We were getting all the backpacks and all the food and Enrique says, "I want to go." I said, "Great." And the kids said, "No, don't take him. Don't take him." I said, "Why?" "He's an epileptic."

So I thought about it and I said, "I'll tell you what, Enrique, why don't you get a note from your doctor saying that he allows you to go on this trip and get another one from your mother; even though there's a normal release form, get a special one saying she gives me permission. If both those people give you permission to go on my trip, I'm not going to stop you. Just tell me what to do if you have a fit."

So he did; he got the two notes. His doctor said he could go and his mother said he could go and he says, "If I get a fit, here's what you do." And he showed me the tongue depressant, showed me where the medicine was and all that and which pockets it was in and he wore a whistle. So I said, "Fine, stick with me. Stick right behind me like you're glued to me the whole trip."

We went down to Pine Valley. Tom Pillsbury was on that trip--maybe you've heard his name mentioned. So I more or less

Colgan: let Tom lead the trip, and I stuck with this kid, giving him all my attention. Then after a while I figured it wasn't necessary; we could be a bit more relaxed. Got into camp and then everything was going really smooth. Then we arranged a side trip down to see the waterfalls at Pine Creek. The creek sort of disappears down this canyon. You follow a trail down along the creek, and all of the sudden, the creek disappears and the canyon sort of widens out, and there's a big waterfall there. A nice swimming hole at the bottom. It's a favorite place to go.

A bunch of kids were out in front. Enrique was out in front, and a lot of the kids didn't see the trail taking off to one side and they were following the creek bed down. Enrique fell over and went down the waterfall. The kids were screaming when I got up there. And I thought, "Gee, I've done it this time; I've killed somebody." I got back on the trail and picked my way down over roots and rocks and things and I saw him in the pool down below me, floating face down. I said, "Well, he's dead. We've just got to get him out of there and then do what we have to do." Then I climbed down some more, and then he crawled out of there. And when I got down, he wasn't dead but he was hurt and he was lying across a rock all wet. He'd hurt his back.

We couldn't get any kind of a rescue party down into this frigging hole; We couldn't even get a horse down there. We had to carry him out. He'd pinched a nerve in his spine or something and he was really hurting, horrible pain. It was only about a mile or so back to where we were camping up this canyon, so we sort of lifted him, carried him, and he half walked and stumbled, yelling out in pain.

Then we got him into camp and luckily for us nearby was a ranger, who was coming on a routine patrol through the area, and he had a radio. So we sent somebody over the ridge to where he (the ranger) was to get a radio in for a helicopter to yank him out of there because there was no way we could get him out. So the guy came back and said that the helicopter couldn't leave because of fog and it wouldn't be able to get there until the next morning. And this was Saturday night, so we had to spend the whole Saturday night with Enrique.

Then he began to have his epileptic fits, and it was one of the most harrowing experiences of my life. Frances was with me, and we were up all night with that kid. He'd have his epileptic seizures every half hour or so, twenty minutes, and they'd last for four or five minutes, tremendous convulsions.

- Colgan:           Anyway, dawn came and we were tired and bedraggled and weary. In comes this big helicopter from Fort Ord, sheriffs jump out with stretcher and come over and put him into it and take him away, carry him away up in the sky. That was quite an experience.
- Dunlavy:        There was one other thing I wanted to ask you: who was Eduardo Hernandez?
- Colgan:         Eduardo? Oh, Eduardo was a classic story of an inner city kid who got really turned on by backpacking. He was involved with a group called Horizons Unlimited. It's out there on 24th Street.
- Dunlavy:        San Francisco?
- Colgan:         Yes. And he was one of the kids going on the trip from this group. He'd been through the mill as an inner city kid; he'd been stabbed and everything, and he'd been busted for this and that, and he was almost going to jail. And this was like a turning point in his life. The last time I heard of Eduardo, he was in charge of that center. He was a young man now, twenty-two, and he was working there. He was running the center. That's who he is.
- Dunlavy:        Well, thank you very much for your time.

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Sierra Club Oral History Project

Jordan Hall

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CHAPTER INNER CITY OUTINGS:  
TRIAL AND ERROR: THE EARLY YEARS

An Interview Conducted by  
Jeanne Richie

Sierra Club History Committee  
1980

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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5/7/79  
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Name and address of Interviewer

May 7, 1979  
Dated

Sierra Club Inner City Outings  
Subject of Interview(s)

## INTERVIEW HISTORY

The interview took place in the spacious and comfortable Hall residence in North Oakland. Mrs. Hall made a brief and gracious appearance at the beginning of the interview. The family's friendly dogs and shy cats were present during most of the session.

Mr. Hall seemed to enjoy experiencing again the adventures and misadventures of his outings with the Inner City groups. He also seemed to relish the opportunity to discuss the history and philosophy of the project and, indeed, of the Sierra Club and conservation in general.

Mr. Hall made only minor corrections and additions to the transcript, and editorial changes by the interviewer and project editor are slight.

Jeanne Richie  
Interviewer/Editor

16 April, 1980  
Berkeley, California



## TRIAL AND ERROR: THE EARLY DAYS

Family Background

Richie: IF you'd give me your name and a little bit about your background, the date and place of your birth.

Hall: I'm Jack Hall, also know as Jordan Hall legally. I was born in Oakland, about a mile from here in 1927, so I'm a fifty-two year old oldtimer now, having been a native son, born and living here. As far as background, Mother's family came from Kansas to state of Washington, Father's family likewise. Actually, my grandfather was a pioneer, one of the last pioneers in the area north of Seattle, I guess, in the 1870's. Anyway, they met. My father came to California to go to Stanford University, and when he saw California, he never went back except to visit on vacations. They got married on a Christmas Day and moved down here, and after a few years, self, later a sister, came along. I grew up and lived here. I guess as far as education, I went to Richmond school district: schools in Richmond, Kensington, high school in El Cerrito, eventually University of California. I studied architecture. Professionally, I'm an architect.

Richie: What was your father's occupation?

Hall: He was a chemist, and Mother was a poet--as an avocation, not as a profession. Part of the artistic background of the family, if any. So, what's next?

Beginning in the Sierra Club

Richie: How did you get involved with the Sierra Club, and when?

Hall: First in 1967. I'd gone through a divorce and was working for a medium-sized architectural firm in San Francisco. Actually, the bookkeeper was a rather nice lady of Irish descent who had traveled around the world, worked a lot of places, been in San Francisco for a while, had been with us for a couple of years. One day she came in with a schedule suggesting I try some Sierra Club trips by way of something new and different. So I did. I started off with a hike in the East Bay hills, Redwood Canyon, with Elizabeth Rothschild. I thought it was great. I rushed up to her afterwards to sponsor me and got rebuffed, of course.

Richie: Why?

Hall: Oh, that's the old guard that had this sort of...well, "If I know who you are and what's going on for five or seven years, maybe I could sponsor you..." The irony was two months later, I was leading a day hike in Marin County totally on my own. First time, no help, no whatever. It's the unevenness of the Sierra Club.

Richie: Oh, my goodness. Had you done much outdoors?

Hall: As a teenager--Boy Scouts, 11, 12 on to preppie age, oh, 21, 22. Went to school--kind of dropped out of it then. Got married--the person I married first time around was--her idea of camping out would be like in the lounge of a hotel on the carpet.

Richie: That helped take you out of it.

Hall: Yes, of course, then kind of rediscovered it and reentered with a bang. Yes, I got involved, went on a day hike, asked a few questions, went on a few more, and the next thing I knew I was signed up to co-lead with a gal I'd never met who had physical problems and I ended up leading a hike from Stinson Beach to Kentfield first time out. Myself with 24 souls and a friend or two who belonged to the club to kind of shepherd things along. Anyway, that's, I suppose, the Sierra Club. When you start you're never experienced or qualified enough, but on the other hand, they need all us unqualified idiots to do their thing for them. So, that's what I've done for a number of years. And I'm still not qualified, so...

Richie: You've done a lot of leading of hikes?

Hall: Yes, day hikes initially then in 1968 went on a bus camping section outing and immediately got drawn into that, took my two daughters who were fairly young to the Yosemite area and had a good time. That was great. Margaret Shaw was running the bus camping then. That was neat, so I got drawn into that



Hall: in a hurry. Worked on that till about two years ago. The section finally kind of fell apart. Charter buses got expensive. They'll probably be back now with gas problems.

Richie: You said you weren't really qualified even though you were leading.

Hall: No, I'm still not.

Richie: What would a qualified leader have as characteristics?

Hall: Oh, more direct, formal training, more first aid, a variety of things. I've been through all that, and I've always been one step behind. I've had responsibility and led it, but always coming up against older Sierra Club types where I'm really not qualified seems to be the message. What the heck! Every member, it's different, it's very uneven.

Richie: You make it sound as if there are quite a few older people who've done a lot of high country hiking, backpacking.

Hall: Well, there were. I've encountered those in the past. Yes, there's quite an older body who have been in quite a while and have a lot of technique and experience. I have my own, hit or miss.

I work for a big architectural-engineering firm. I have to laugh, because nowadays a lot of the engineer types are very concerned, very threatened, by the environmentalists and the Sierra Club, which is pretty laughable when you know what the opposition is. An awful lot of the people I've known in the Sierra Club are primarily interested in just getting out and in activities, and don't give a damn about conservation, really. I'm not so sure the Sierra Club as a whole does.

Richie: It's really quite heterogeneous?

Hall: Oh, I think so. Every member's a different Sierra Club. It's kind of too bad today everything's polarized. You're all for development or all for conservation.

In terms of Inner Cities, I haven't actively done much for about three years as far as leading or helping with trips directly. Some of the experience in the past was to get inner city kids to learn how to use a bus line. It used to cost twenty-five cents to ride the Muni and that would get you to the Golden Gate Bridge Authority's bus line which would get you to Marin County. If you know some of the ropes you could get out and learn some trails and do your own thing for practically no money. You really didn't need the whities from the Sierra

Hall: Club to lead you along by the hand. I think that's pretty valid, especially now.

First Involvement with Inner City Outings

Richie: How did you get interested in the Inner City Outings?

Hall: Indirectly, I was in on the founding through bus camping trips, starting in 1968. The last one we did was last year, up in Trinity Alps. My wife and I led one and bowed out. It's nine years, working in that as well as getting involved in inner cities and leading day hikes. We had a meeting, had kind of a problem, had our own treasury, and we handled quite a bit of money in a given year. You have to hire buses. Bus trips are usually three or four hundred dollars and you have to put up the money and then collect from the people who are going. At any rate, the bus camping is technically Treasury's, an extension of the Bay Chapter. At the end of the activity year, whatever was residual in the fund was now supposed to be accounted for. If you had a surplus, it could be donated back to the Treasury but earmarked for a "conservation" purpose.

There was a kind of rumor that they were setting up, well, what's become the inner cities section, taking the under-privileged out and introducing them to something very much in contrast to the asphalt and the urban jungle. It seemed like a good idea. We could direct our surplus, which was there because we tended to gain some. We said okay for the new section. I think there were four or five hundred dollars at the time to direct towards that which was sent in and so earmarked.

Somewhere in there--there were two of us in the bus camping--we did get word of a meeting at the national and chapter headquarters then at Mills Tower in San Francisco. We went to the organizational meeting. It was kind of interesting. A gentleman named Ring Ringdahl, who was an old Viking who had led bus camping a lot, and myself attended. Things seemed well in hand. There were a lot of enthusiastic young types who were on to it, worked with kids. Most of them seemed to be in education--teachers. They had everything, so it seemed, in hand. They had some funds. They didn't have a section leader, but Marlene Sarnat became kind of the convener. She volunteered and was the real section leader, per se, for the first couple of years, did a very good job at getting the whole thing together. She kind of stepped forward and said she would. So we went. It was kind of interesting. I guess

Hall: Ring was around retirement age, and I was in my mid-forties, so we seemed kind of old among all the thirtyish types who got together and organized it.

About six months later, I think, we heard that all the education types that had showed up at the first meeting faded in a few months; they talked a lot and never did a damned thing. Stirred the pot, well, probably got a lot of momentum. I don't know where I heard more of inner cities, being a bystander on the formation. I was aware of it, might have been through publication or word of mouth. The initial great push had sort of faded. Of the interested types, a lot had faded away.

### Centro Latino

Hall: It must have been around 1970 or '71, I got word that if I was interested, there was a young married couple, the LaBoyteauxes, Mary Em and Duff, who were working with a group in the Mission District in San Francisco. If I was interested, I could call them, kind of feel my way into it. So I did. They seemed to be organized and enthusiastic, and sure, come on a trip. Guess I went to one of their pre-trip meetings at Centro Latino. It was a community center across from San Francisco General Hospital, generally speaking, Potrero Avenue and in there. The center sponsored a group there, essentially Latin American, and a number of black kids related to the Center. Anyway, they sponsored working with the Sierra Club, and kind of in an offhand way came up with a community leader for each trip, which, as it got going, probably wasn't quite as important. They supported pretty well as a community group, they had a van which they donated for transportation, which helped quite a bit. The thing was mechanically a wreck, sometimes more of a hindrance than a help, but they meant well. We used it a lot.

Richie: What kind of program were the LaBoyteauxes involved in?

Hall: Centro Latino was a community group, and they were the Sierra Club over-all trip organizers, where to go and giving the technical know-how, the pathfinders. Centro Latino had some people working with them, mostly in their early twenties, that helped. They had one fellow who was very helpful who was a conscientious objector from the Vietnam War. He worked with the group as his alternate duty. Then, he also drove a bus for the San Francisco school district. Anyway, he was great as a leader, and he also had a chauffeur's license so he could drive the van or other things. When you get over ten people you need a professional chauffeur-licensed driver, so he represented that. He was good with kids.

Hall: I drifted in with them, went to a pre-trip meeting. I'm not sure where the first trip was. Over a period of three, four years we went out a lot with the group. Saw a lot of very good development. The LaBoyteauxes attempted to get them self-sufficient, to get some of the kids who were fifteen or sixteen when they started--as they got up to, say, seventeen and had shown interest, had gone out with continuity--to become gradually the leaders, which to quite a degree they did and also become self-sufficient on money.

Initially Sierra Club Foundation would put up the money for food. It cost the kids nothing, except twenty-five cents for their insurance each and their release of responsibility slip from their parents. The Sierra Club, of course, put up the equipment. In theory, if you drove, you could put in for mileage through the foundation, which, at that time, none of us bothered, of course, because you'd just deplete the fund there. Yes, we got them out for a good three or four years. The group put on paper drives and saved aluminum cans and stored everything in one kid's basement of his house, lived near Centro Latino. It was nice, so they got cash from that and could buy food. They kind of became self-sufficient.

Richie: What age were these?

Hall: Well, 12 to 16, probably tended to be 14, 15, boys and girls, Latinos, a fair number of Blacks lived in the area. An interesting group, that's the one I worked the longest with. A number of them, probably a half dozen in particular got very good skills as far as generally planning, leading. Going out weekend hikes, backpacking, some of them got very trail-wise. It sounds easy to follow a well-trodden trail, except a lot of people go off little side paths people have beaten off for the view and miss it very easily. A half dozen of these kids--unerringly they'd follow it, and knew where to put the sleeping bag at night, under a tree so they wouldn't wake up covered with dew. Just had a lot of savvy and got rather good at helping prepare food, took it up very naturally.

Richie: That must have been a very encouraging experience.

Hall: Yes, it was, probably the most reassuring. Of course, it went on eventually. Centro Latino supported less. They were willing to let individuals and the Sierra Club continue doing it but gradually dropped off a lot of support, kind of became disinterested. Well, they organize. As far as getting community people to lead and get interested in backpacking, they organize and go out for one or two times, and then they're more interested in other things come weekends. You go out a few times and the novelty wears off. In some ways it's a lot of hard work. Frankly, a lot of them are urban people who

Hall: don't care for the outdoors, really, all that much.

So that kind of faded away. Pretty much the same group went on its own. I think it probably did well. It exposed a fairly large number of kids, some for several years. some half the time, some maybe once or twice. But I think it gave them a good experience, helped them with something, showed them an alternative, a little savvy--yes, you can organize yourself, you can get out of the city and can do something.

Richie: What size groups did you lead? How many went?

Hall: It tended to be fifteen to twenty, maybe in an extreme case you might get up to two dozen. Duff had a van of sorts, an old panel truck from the late '40s, early 1950s, which could hold twelve to fifteen kids. He fixed it up and carpeted it, and the kids just spread out in the back and spread the gear around, lay on it, sit on it, sleep on it. So we drove. I suppose it worked out, maybe we tended to have four adults, usually tried to. Usually you want about a five-to-one ratio, if you can, with one leader to five kids. If you get much over that it seems like you just begin to have problems.

Richie: This is a difficult age group to work with.

Hall: Well, yes, I suppose, although I've worked with some older, some young adults who were in drug centers. In some ways, they're just as much trouble, in their own way, even though they're supposed to be more mature.

Richie: You worked with some of those, too?

Hall: Yes, in Berkeley.

#### Other Inner City Groups

Richie: How did you, how did the Sierra Club reach those?

Hall: People in groups would, in one way or another, get information on the inner cities as a program and they'd call in, express interest. There was a group in downtown San Francisco with a community center and building behind the Opera House on Grove Street, a building that had been condemned that the city had sort of inherited and given over for community use. It was substandard for building codes and this and that, but the city let them use it. I can't quite remember the name of the group, but this was Black and in the shadow of City Hall, very much ignored, on their own doorstep, practically. They wanted

Hall: some help, and we did a couple trips, but they were sort of militant, kind of anti-white. As long as the Sierra Club wanted to put up, do everything, do all the work...but as far as community leaders, they really didn't want to cooperate.

Potentially it was good and was interesting, of course. They would start it off with no pre-trip planning or meeting with the kids, which their community main leader cut off with some pretext. It ended up with four of us leading, including Marlene Sarnat, who was the first convener and section leader. Four of us went off with twenty-four of them--just showed up. It was a crazy week-end, but it turned out pretty good.

There was one black girl, who was heavy and overweight. No pre-trip meeting, no real planning. A lot of them had no idea what they were really getting into. Went up to Sonora Pass area, Kennedy Meadows and back into Relief Reservoir. It was a warm summer day in the 90s, and a dusty trail. Anyway, we clambered up, and this one girl just couldn't carry the pack. Their community leader delegated by the group was an eighteen year old kid, actually very adept and adult. His father had been in the Air Force, kind of disciplined and organized and the son was, too. He was very good. He carried his own pack--he was a good athlete--and carried hers too half the distance. Anyway, it was kind of amusing. The gal couldn't understand why she was out there or why anybody would want to do this sort of thing, certainly never catch her out there again. But it was interesting after the trip--guess who was the first to sign up for the next one? The gal, of course. So, they get pushed and challenged. Well, the minorities are tough, basically. If someone works them and pushes them, they respond to that. It's different, and they don't like it at the time, but it sinks in, and "Gee, that was a great experience..."

Richie: After it was over.

Hall: "Never go on another one," but next list, "Boy, where is it?" First one to sign up even before there is a list.

So I guess we did maybe two trips with them, and then they were interested in other things. It worked well. They have to pick and choose. They have their staff and resources and funding. Anyway, we at that time decided, especially after being overwhelmed by the quantity of kids for the number of leaders, which isn't the greatest. That's something we kind of learned the hard way, I guess early on. I don't know where Patrick Colgan got into the act--interesting guy.

I think the style initially was just get up and go, get kids, go to it and to heck with the consequences and the

Hall: responsibility. Just take kids and go do something and organize it the best you could. Every trip was sort of an adventure, literally, ran into some pretty crazy things sometimes. But, it seemed worth it. Then after doing that for probably about three years, "Well, we really don't have to do it this way." An awful lot of interest from community groups--you could pick and choose and say, "If we're going to lead and provide the equipment, the expert general technical expertise out-of-doors, and the place to go and how to get there, then, you as a minimum can at least provide this and organize your kids and control them. We're not going to discipline them."

So we got a little smarter, had newer, maybe younger people coming in who probably wouldn't have put up with some of the circumstances starting off, which was just more kind of wild and woolly and gung ho and go do it regardless. It got more organized, more sedate, and more controlled, I guess. At which point I first began to get out of it, I think.

#### An Experimental Approach to Group Leadership

Richie: It sounds as if you had a philosophy, even at the beginning when it wasn't organized, because you were turning over the responsibility to the children.

Hall: To the extent they could take it. I mean, they didn't really have a lot, but the attempt to get them to--yeah, like Centro Latino. They'd meet, plan menus and then meet to go out and buy food together, which was great.

Richie: You started with the easier things that are related to experiences they already had.

Hall: Which is like shopping. You'd meet and talk about menus and the things they'd like. They'd go through and express everything they'd like, kind of explain well, watermelon--you've got to carry it--do you really want to? So, well, yes. You had a good idea of what you wanted for a menu, but you'd kind of jolly them along and point out what made sense and what didn't. Eventually they selected pretty much what you had in mind, so that worked well. That group in particular, with the continuity I think got a lot of that. And some other groups.

Of course, when you get into the drug groups, you pretty much have to pick out certain things. Although, one in Berkeley, Bridge Over Troubled Waters, a live-in drug group on the north side of campus there, had their own kitchen. A lot of people worked in it so they had preferences and pre-plan.

Hall: Actually, in their case, their commissary would buy a lot of the food and bring it, so that was quite a help. In fact, on some trips, maybe they did it all, just lay it out so they could come up with that. That was kind of interesting.

Their leadership was the people themselves within their set-up. The more senior people were their leaders in the group. They insisted if they went as a group, it's usually the more senior or longer term members of the group who are the senior members, which in a way was good, but in a way was kind of weak. It'd been better if somebody with the staff per se rather than the inmates, if that's what you want to call them, maybe had come along. The problems there were a little different. One trip where the guy who was the leader was the one who went out on his own, fishing, got into trouble, and we ended up with a helicopter carry-out because he'd fallen. Well, we worked with what they had. You sort of get brought up short when you discover a lot of weaknesses.

Richie: You had to take them on their own terms pretty much.

Hall: Yes, by and large. You can interpose certain things, but again, I think the intent was to work with them. I'd get referred to some of these groups because I was willing to try and go along. Some of these are new and you feel your way in, try to get some sort of working relationship. Bridge--we took them out a number of times, began to get continuity, something going. Some of them were strictly high risk. You just try them because that hadn't been tried with these groups and they're valid. Outdoor experience probably could do them a lot of good; in fact, the ones from Berkeley that went seemed to be pretty turned on to it.

Richie: You did see development, some change.

Hall: Yes, the attitude. Some would even comment--they may relapse, but even say, they'd been spending so long waking up in the morning not sure where they were, their vision blurred and everything foggy and how great it was being out of doors, working physically and waking up with scenery and a clear head, clear mind. It was quite a really enjoyable contrast.

#### Methadone Group

Hall: I guess we tried one that was really experimental. That's the methadone clinic in San Francisco. A relatively young lawyer on the staff took an interest and heard about the Sierra Club and Inner Cities and wanted to get a group going there.



Hall: So he called in, and somebody called me, so I said yes. I talked to him, and we got together and put something together to get a group out. That was interesting, because they had to take a male nurse, medic, along with limited doses of methadone to mix to give on the week-end.

That turned into quite a donnybrook in that the group was fine except for one older gal, a woman, about forty at the time, who it seemed it might do her some good. She'd been on hard drugs probably since she was twenty and had an anatomy like a workhorse or she'd been dead long before from all the self-abuse. Actually the outing was fine. We got off down in the Ventana Wilderness below Carmel Valley, and I guess she needed attention. Psychologically, somewhere in there she just decided she couldn't get out, so we spent an extra day trying to jolly her out. It turned out she was also epileptic.

We had gone in on a Saturday. On Sunday morning she woke up all nervous and got the medic to give her methadone, and then she got sick and threw up. Then she was getting worried that she was going into withdrawal, which was ridiculous. The other people along told us that it wouldn't begin for another twelve to twenty-four hours at the most, gradually. She also decided she was having an epileptic seizure, maybe. So, trying to leave, pack out, she at some point just ran back to where we'd camped. The fellow who had organized the whole thing, the lawyer, stayed with her overnight. The helicopter got her out the next day. And, so it went!

Richie: But you did get some support, anyway, from the rest of the group.

Hall: Oh, sure, very good, in fact. Up to a point they tried. One young fellow in particular tried to kid her along, and they cheerfully stayed the extra day while we hung around. Instead of getting back on a Sunday, we got back Monday and went straight to the clinic so they could get their methadone, because there was only enough for the Sunday, the one day. They wouldn't let anything extra go with the person who administered it.

Richie: So you had the helicopter out twice?

Hall: Oh, yes.

Richie: How did you get in contact with the helicopter service?

Hall: You blunder around until you get help.

Richie: You don't have a radio?

Hall: No. I was kind of naive when we went down there below China Camp, Pine Valley area. By the time I realized we had a problem

Hall: and got out, it was probably nine or ten at night. I had finished hiking out at night, carrying this girl's gear, what was left. The lawyer followed her back, found her. We really at that point didn't know what was going on. The next morning, near by China Camp, Chew's Ridge, there's a State Forestry station, so we went up to the tower, climbed the stairs. The forester had heard our footsteps, was busy shoving his wine jugs out of sight, kind of blinking his eyes. I guess he'd had a good evening. The usual good, steady state employee type. He didn't know nothing about nothing. The thing to do was get in touch with the Monterey Sheriff's office. So a couple of us drove down and got into Carmel Valley. There was the sheriff's deputy, so we contacted him. I had these naive notions that they'd probably send somebody in on horseback, take a day, ride in with a spare horse, gather up the lady and bring her out. Well, that's pretty dumb nowadays. A helicopter's expensive, but paying two or three men to ride horseback for one day is probably ten times what it takes a helicopter to do in two hours or less.

We discovered Monterey County has a volunteer rescue squad, which is terrific. Later, with Bridge over Troubled Waters, we went through the same thing, and a helicopter was called in from Fort Ord, I think they regard it somewhat as training, too. An Army helicopter, beautifully organized. They knew just what to do. I contacted them. I didn't know how they'd accomplish it, but they described how, yes, they'd probably send one in. It turned out that the lawyer led the girl part way back and found a clear space. He had no direct word, but we'd sort of agreed probably what we'd do. He just used common sense. Anyway, the helicopter came over, and he waved. He was near a cleared area, in fact, he said it was very impressive. The thing came down in a nice little grassy area, maybe ninety feet in diameter with a big oak tree. They set this thing down, which is a "big" six-seat Army helicopter. He said the rotor blades barely cleared the tree, and got them both in. Off they went, over to Salinas and put her in the hospital where we got her later. She was as belligerent as hell and still hadn't got her methadone. Of course over there, they were trying to shut her up, get the local police to throw her in the jug. "We don't need this abuse. Nothing wrong with you, other than all the swift kicks you haven't gotten over the last twenty, thirty years that you should have had to shape you up." So, anyway, we got her back. She got her methadone at the end of the day and calmed down. Of course, she's another one: "Now, when's the next one? Terrific."

I guess the irony on that one--I guess there was just the one trip because the eager young lawyer ended up over by Muir Beach in the Zen Center, suddenly growing vegetables and

Hall: meditating. He delegated to a supernumerary I talked to a few times, but didn't have his zest and savvy, so I don't think we ever got another one going quite. But that was a great try. It was very interesting, very hit or miss, and we missed with the gal. The sheriff's department guy in Carmel Valley, after he'd radioed everything asked, "Why did you take her out?" So, you know, you don't have a ready answer, but well, it was worth the risk. What the heck! After all, if a bunch of idiots didn't go out and get in trouble, a guy like him wouldn't have a job, in a manner of speaking. He's got problems, so he's a problem-solver whether he likes it or not.

### In Retrospect

Hall: It was quite a learning experience. Of course, you discover too much of this going off half-cocked maybe isn't so good, although in retrospect maybe the risk was worth taking. After all, you can try to do better now, but probably, at the time, what the heck! Here's a group of people that kind of lived on the edge. That's another hootenanny to them, maybe. Two of the guys that went along seemed to be...well, I think some sign that even that kind of spurred them. One had been working his dosage down, getting out without withdrawal, which I guess you can do over several years successfully, not easily. It (the trip) kind of turned him on, seemed to, verbally. Where he went, I'm not sure. He was viewed as successfully leaving the program and getting down where he'd not need methadone and stay off heroin, hopefully. Perhaps he did. Anyway, that seemed to get him turned on to go off and try this, do that. Kind of a catalyst. At least he talked a lot about it. Another young Mexican American fellow seemed to be doing the same thing, seemed to really like the experience. I think it gives perspective, if you live in the city, in the urban mess. Yes, it's probably worthwhile. Sort of an alternative.

Richie: How long were you involved in this?

Hall: Three to four years, I guess. I still have some involvement. Mostly, we keep acquainted with the leadership. We host potluck dinners for the leaders and would-be leaders, which I think is important. People who are interested are invited to come, phone in, tell them to come, they can talk to people who lead and get a good idea of what's going on and what it's all about. I think that's very useful.

Richie: Why did you terminate your active participation?

Hall: I got remarried, and your interests just get into other things.

Hall: I may get back into it more actively again.

Richie: It must take a very unusual type of person to have the patience and imagination to work with these groups.

Hall: Well, yes. Of course now I have rather mixed feelings. I don't know whether it's such a good idea to get all these people into the out-of-doors or not!

Richie: Do you hear from any of the Latinos that you worked with?

Hall: No, because of living in the East Bay. They're all in the Mission. Indirectly. Duff has kept some track. Some of them have gone on to school here and there. One of them who was quite a cut-up and problem, but a lot of fun, has dropped down and become nothing but a drug peddler. Oh, you know, successful in that sense, but a real drop-out. He may peddle drugs better because he went on so many of our trips and was discovered smoking marijuana up on the Point Reyes hillside and doing other things, maybe with heavier stuff. I'm probably not all that smart driving along myself in my car with four or five kids in the back seat--all smoking something sweet-smelling and laughing like crazy because yours truly doesn't know what's going on...

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Sierra Club Oral History Project

Duff LaBoyteaux

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CHAPTER INNER CITY OUTINGS:  
TOWARDS A NATIONAL SIERRA CLUB PROGRAM

An Interview Conducted by  
Mary Adams

Sierra Club History Committee  
1980

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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1443 15th Avenue  
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Name and address of Narrator

Accepted for the Sierra  
Club by

Ann Lage  
Chairman, History Committee

5-25-79  
Dated

May 9, 1979  
Dated

Mary E. Adams  
Signature of Interviewer

MARY ADAMS  
1040 Baker St. #4  
San Francisco, CA  
Name and address of Interviewer

May 9, 1979  
Dated

Sierra Club Inner City Outings Program  
Subject of Interview(s)

## INTERVIEW HISTORY

This interview was part of a seminar project in oral history at the University of California, Berkeley, spring quarter 1979. The interviews were conducted in conjunction with the Sierra Club History Committee.

It was felt that Duff LaBoyteaux would be an important person to interview for the series, stemming from his service as chairman of the National Subcommittee on Inner City Outings and his extensive involvement in the Bay Area Chapter's Inner City Outings program. Mr. LaBoyteaux was one of the earliest and most active members of the Bay Chapter ICO. In addition, he has worked on the Bay Chapter Wilderness Subcommittee and on the steering committee for People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Mr. LaBoyteaux was quite willing to grant an interview, despite his very busy schedule. The interview was conducted in his home, and the atmosphere was relaxed and friendly. As an interviewee, Duff was articulate and thorough, appearing to be quite comfortable in the role of ICO advocate due, no doubt, to his history of administrative involvement. However, probably due to his official position of advocacy for the program, he was reluctant to discuss problems or drawbacks of the program or trip experiences, stressing that negative episodes were generally "exceptions" he would prefer not to dwell on. It was also at times difficult to get him to talk about himself. Again, this may stem from his administrative role as spokesperson for the program as well as, perhaps, an inherent modesty.

Mr. LaBoyteaux impressed the interviewer as a person with high social ideals and a strong commitment to the goals of the Inner City Outings program.

Note on editing: Mr. LaBoyteaux reviewed the interview transcript for accuracy, and the interviewer has done only minimal editing, i.e. correcting punctuation, eliminating unnecessary words and false starts, and paragraphing.

Mary Adams  
Interviewer  
January, 1980



## TOWARDS A NATIONAL SIERRA CLUB PROGRAM

Individual Background

Adams: It is May 9, 1979. This is Mary Adams and I am interviewing Duff LaBoyteaux this evening at his home in San Francisco. Duff LaBoyteaux is currently the Chairman of the National Sub-Committee on Inner City Outings for the Sierra Club. He has held this position for just about a year now. I will be interviewing Mr. LaBoyteaux concerning his involvement in the Inner City Outings Program within the Sierra Club.

Where were you born, and when?

LaBoyteaux: I was born here in San Francisco in 1946. That would make me thirty-two, I guess.

Adams: What did your parents do for a living?

LaBoyteaux: My mother is a nurse, and my father is in the insurance business--insuring ships, cargoes and things like that.

Adams: Did they have any special interests that would at all help explain why you are now involved in the Sierra Club?

LaBoyteaux: No, probably not my parents; if anyone, my grandfather. My grandfather came to California--maybe he thought he was a 49er, but got here too late--and he hiked extensively in the Sierra Nevadas. He never did it with any organized group. I'm sure he was never a member of the Sierra Club in the early years, but I've had a number of his things handed down to me, among which are a lot of really ancient topographic maps with tracings of his trips and things like that. So I think I probably inherited an outdoor spirit from him.

Adams: Where did he migrate from?

LaBoyteaux: West Virginia. Charleston, West Virginia. I don't believe we're able to follow the family back into France, so we seem

LaBoyteaux: to have appeared mysteriously here in the Virginia colony.

Adams: Can you tell me something about your educational background?

LaBoyteaux: I had a predominantly Catholic upbringing. I went to Catholic grammar school and high school, and then I went off to Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, which is also a Jesuit college. I don't have a degree. I got involved when I was there with a student exchange program which I probably was involved in as fervently as I am in Inner City Outings now. And I also got involved in the anti-war movement. This was in the mid-late sixties.

Adams: Was that the Los Amigos Cultural Exchange Program?

LaBoyteaux: Yes, it was.

Adams: And so that was the late sixties?

LaBoyteaux: Right. I spent summers in '66 through '69 in Mexico. And probably that experience had a great deal to do with changing a lot of the attitudes I had grown up with and making me more sensitive to people who were different than I am--culturally different than I am.

Adams: What were you doing in this program?

LaBoyteaux: Well, the Los Amigos was conceived sort of in the wake of the Peace Corps enthusiasm. Lots of college students wanted to run off to foreign countries and try to help their little brown brothers or something like that, and I'm afraid that we had that sense of misguided altruism, too. I will say that within the years that I was in the Los Amigos program, I think the emphasis changed from one of this sort of messianic approach to one of simply going to have a cross-cultural experience, to learn about other people and how they live, you know, and to just try to share knowledge and share experiences. So I felt more positively about it in, say, '69, than I did early on. I was just as, I should say, messianically motivated as everyone else in '66. I went through a big change.

Adams: Did you think about becoming a priest?

LaBoyteaux: No. I was under some pressure from the president of the university and some others--the Jesuits--to become a priest, but I just never really had that in mind. I was quite sure I wanted to get married at that time, and that made all the difference.

Adams: What is your occupational background?

LaBoyteaux: I've held a variety of jobs since I left Spokane. I was a conscientious objector in the Vietnam War. I think probably the Mexico experience was one of the things that turned my attitudes around to the extent that I was in the ROTC and I dropped out of the ROTC to become a conscientious objector. Because I was forced to refuse to be inducted into the military, I was arrested. I had to stand trial, but I was fortunate enough to be acquitted, based on the fact that the court felt that I had made a good case as a conscientious objector to my draft board and that the draft board had just been obstinate.

However, you are required to do alternative service even if you are a conscientious objector, so I had to do alternative service, and alternative service was what got me into my first employment after Spokane, which was working in a juvenile home in Lodi--a home for boys. And that home closed while I was in the employment of that company and I moved back to San Francisco and continued in that work for another eighteen months and ended up finishing my last six months of alternative service at the Sierra Club.

Adams: In what capacity?

LaBoyteaux: I worked as a research assistant to Gordon Robinson, who was the staff forester at that time. It was during the early stages of the Roadless Area Review--RARE I. I was coordinating teams of volunteers who went out into the field to investigate roadless areas that could potentially qualify under the Wilderness Act, particularly areas that may have been left out of the Forest Service inventory or where the Sierra Club claimed that there was a wilderness and the Forest Service said no, there wasn't.

Adams: Was it common for conscientious objectors to do alternative service with the Sierra Club?

LaBoyteaux: No, it came as a surprise to me that I could work at the Sierra Club. I guess my environmental leanings were somewhat unconscious at that point, but when I was down at the draft board, I was looking down the list of places that were okay to work for, and I came across the Sierra Club. I said, "Gee, I'd like to work for the Sierra Club," and I went right down. The person who interviewed me in the beginning there said they had only had one, I think, conscientious objector work for the club before. Seems to me it was maybe Jonathan Ela, who was a regional representative--I'm not sure that it was Jonathan.

Adams: I'd like to take up with that again in a minute, but I want to make sure that we get what you currently do for a living.

LaBoyteaux: Okay. I have, you might say, a handyman business. And I do it to keep afloat. My real dedication at this point has become the Inner City Outings Program and related programs that I'm involved in around the city. I'd very much like to be employed in the field. We have a project afoot to create what we're calling an "urban outdoor adventure center," out here in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. It would be sponsored by a coalition of outdoor community service groups throughout the Bay Area, and if we can find some funding to put that center together, I think I'd probably stand a good chance of being an employee there. I'd very much like to do that.

Adams: Sounds wonderful. Would the Sierra Club support that program?

LaBoyteaux: The Sierra Club would be a member of the coalition that is forming the center, and the center would be a non-profit corporation in itself. There would be no legal tie to the Sierra Club. It would just be something the Sierra Club is in favor of.

Adams: So, what was the date again that you first began working for the Sierra Club as a conscientious objector?

LaBoyteaux: Oh, I think it was sometime in 1970 or '71, about then, but I had done alternative service with the other outfit for a while, so it could have been into early '72.

#### Early Involvement in the Sierra Club

Adams: Could you tell me something about your initial involvement with the Sierra Club? You've explained what your job was, but subsequent to that did you then join? What kinds of activities were you involved in?

LaBoyteaux: I was working at the national office, and the national office is the focal point of everything that goes on in the Sierra Club. For a lot of newcomers it can be depressing in that sense because it's where you hear constantly about environmental degradation going on everywhere--all the fronts. You hear the battle news from all the environmental fronts all at once. And I'm sure that somewhere along there I joined the club for the first time; I can't remember precisely when. I think that when I became involved in the Inner City Outings Program it was probably the very first thing I'd done with the Bay Area Chapter in the Sierra Club. Beyond that I think I had just, you know, been a member and received my Bulletin.



LaBoyteaux: Somewhere in there too, about that same time, I became involved with People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area. I ultimately represented the Sierra Club in Washington at the hearings for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. I know that some of the people who were involved in the beginning of the Inner City Outings Program in San Francisco were the same people that were involved in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area effort. Part of the reality was that they didn't have any political support from any segment of the community except the traditional mostly middle-class white people. So, I think that the Inner City Outings Program was, in some people's minds anyway, a way to bring the idea of this "people's park"--a park for the people--to the communities that they had really intended that they wanted to serve.

The fallacy in all that was that they were talking about legislation within six months, and we've since learned that a real relationship with communities throughout the city--inner city communities, minority communities--cannot be established in six months. The most important thing in any kind of an outreach program--and that's what really Inner Cities is, an outreach program--is continuity over a long time. So I don't think that the program succeeded in what some people really intended it for in the beginning--which was to generate some political support for the GGNRA--but because it continued it has been successful over eight or nine years now in making a lot of good friends in communities throughout the Bay Area--and probably bringing an environmental consciousness to thousands of people who probably would not have otherwise been reached.

#### ICO and the Inner City Communities

LaBoyteaux: I'm seeing a lot of things happening now where we're actually getting some real tangible support on political issues. There was a demonstration here in Golden Gate Park last weekend for the Stanislaus River, and there were a number of people there who were from communities or neighborhoods that we probably would not have seen represented had it not been for contacts that had been made for years and years now by the Inner City Outings program.

Adams: For example, what groups? And what is the process by which the contact is established?

LaBoyteaux: Just generally, the formula is that Inner City Outings goes to a community agency--call that a neighborhood recreation center,

LaBoyteaux: church group, school, juvenile court, drug treatment agency, a drop-in center--you name it, whatever it is, wherever people gather. We go in there and we knock on the door and we say, "Would you like to, as a recreational activity, perhaps try a backpack trip?" It's the most difficult part of the whole program, making these initial contacts, and the hardest thing to do is to find volunteers who have that kind of initiative to go out and knock on the door and say, "Hey, I'm from the Sierra Club!" You know, "Who?!" (Laughs.) "What?" And it's getting easier now because we've been going for seven or eight years, and a lot of people have heard about us, and we get referrals. So, at least half, I think, of all the groups we work with now have come to us on referrals or have heard of us, have called us up and said, "Hey, I understand you guys do something with camping trips." So, I suppose that's the way initial contacts are made. We haven't done any advertising, it's been totally word of mouth.

Adams: But you do now have people calling you.

LaBoyteaux: Yes, we do have people calling us. In fact, it's a constant struggle. You figure there are three bottlenecks in the program. One is the number of leaders we have at any given time who can lead groups. The second one is the amount of equipment we have available to outfit groups. And then the third is the number of groups we have to work with. And, from month to month, one month we've got more groups than we've got leaders and we're scrambling to find leaders. The next month we have a couple of excess leaders but no community group has called up. It just goes like that month to month and year to year.

Adams: So it's difficult to predict.

LaBoyteaux: Yeah, it is very difficult to predict. Now, I think what I'm saying here is kind of specific to the Bay Area in that sense because some of the groups in other parts of the country and even some other outdoor service groups even here in the Bay Area have a little bit different approach. They will define at the beginning of a year, say, three or four agencies that they're going to concentrate all their energy on, and they work specifically with those agencies. They give them a schedule of trips for the whole year to start with. And I think that's a very successful approach. It means that they are probably more successful than (I'm thinking of the Philadelphia group in particular) the Bay Area program in getting a core of young people or people from that community well trained in backpacking.

Because we operate differently here, we probably don't see the same kids all the time. We leave it up to our

LaBoyteaux: individual leaders as to what kind of relationship they want to have with a given neighborhood agency. So a lot of our leaders choose to have a long-term relationship with that agency and some leaders choose to just view it as a one, two, or three-trip thing that they're doing.

I can't say which overall is better. We certainly have the advantage of flexibility. We can respond quickly to a group that we really feel we ought to try to do something with right away. For instance, a couple weeks ago an organization in the East Bay called the Deaf Counseling and Referral Agency called us. They want us to establish a total outdoor program for the deaf agency. We're flexible enough to do that. We're going to scrounge around. We're going to find a couple of people. In fact, what we're going to end up doing is including them in our regular programs so that we train some of their people who are deaf to lead trips and run their own training. They'll be members of the Sierra Club, they'll be under Sierra Club insurance coverage, they'll use our equipment.

#### Insurance Coverage

Adams: Could you tell me something about the Sierra Club insurance program?

LaBoyteaux: There are two kinds of insurance that we have to be concerned with. One is general liability insurance, which protects the Sierra Club itself and protects the Sierra Club's leaders against lawsuits which might develop from any accident or mishap that should happen on a trip. It was that concern about liability insurance because of the San Diego accident which I mentioned that forced the board of directors to take a real scrutinizing look at Inner City Outings in 1976. The board responded by passing guidelines under which Inner City Outings operates. In the long run those guidelines have probably been one of the best things that happened because they demanded that we have some minimum leadership standards, that we follow minimum procedures, and consequently we have not had an insurance claim in over two years--any kind of insurance claim.

Adams: Is this nationally?

LaBoyteaux: This is nationally--180 trips and 8000 wilderness days, or something, in the last year. So I think that pretty well speaks for itself. What they did was a good thing. It was a little bit hard to swallow at the beginning, but we managed and it's much better now.

LaBoyteaux: There's a second kind of insurance. Inner City Outings is required by those guidelines to provide medical insurance for all the participants, leaders and youth or any kind of participants that go on the trips. We have a blanket policy through a San Francisco broker, and it extends to the groups throughout the country. It's basically--oh, I often refer to it as the Boy Scout insurance program--it covers camps and the premium is fairly minimal. We pay it out of Inner City Outings' funds that we raise ourselves; the club does not pay it. It provides \$5,000 per injury coverage for anything that should occur on the trip. We have not had to use it for a couple of years.

#### Trip Leaders: Skills and Training

Adams: You mentioned minimal leadership skills and qualifications. Could you tell me something about who the volunteers are, and what kind of training they generally have?

LaBoyteaux: I think that our leaders come from two or three areas. All of the leaders must be Sierra Club members to be leaders; however, a number of the leaders become members of the Sierra Club so they can lead in the program. So those individuals--maybe a third or a half of those individuals--come from the Sierra Club itself, from other sections of the Sierra Club or come to us from some part of the Sierra Club and they hear about the program and it sounds like something they'd be interested in doing.

Probably the other half of the leaders are people who are already involved with community service activities in one way or another. They're a youth counselor; they work for the juvenile court; they're involved in some other community service program. They hear about this program and it's, "Gee, I'd like to be able to do that with the people I work with. How can I become a leader?" And so, well, you go and join the Sierra Club, and then you go through our leader training program, and you can become a leader.

We have basic standards for leadership besides being a member of the club, and that's so that the insurance will apply to them. We have a minimum first aid requirement, which is Red Cross standard at this time. Then, having those two basic requirements taken care of, a leader has to go out on what we call "check-out" trips with experienced leaders. There is no specific set number of check-out trips. But what we're looking for on these trips is: one, that they have good wilderness skills, that they're not going to get lost,

LaBoyteaux: that they're not going to burn down the forest, that they're not going to pollute or severely impact the area that they camp in. And secondly, that they know how to deal with whatever group it is, that they're a good people-leader--they can work with people well.

That's probably the unique skill that Inner City Outings' leaders have that may be a little greater or different from other Sierra Club outings. We attempt to work with the most diverse groups of people we can find. We reach out to find people that would have the least chance of ever seeing the wilderness. It's written specifically in our by-laws that the purpose of the program is to provide wilderness experiences to people who would not otherwise have the opportunity. And so we reach to the farthest extent of that.

You can't go out on a check-out trip with one leader one time and be certified. It has to be agreed on by at least two experienced leaders that you know what you're doing. That certifies you to lead the basic backpack trip.

Most of our trips are a three-day weekend backpack trip. It does not qualify you to lead snow camping. It does not qualify you to do rock climbing, any kind of boating or other technical outing. We do those kinds of outings, but we have additional criteria that you have to meet to do those kinds of outings.

Generally, as a rule of thumb, those criteria for technical kinds of things are the same as for that section of the Sierra Club that normally does that activity. For example, a rock climbing leader in Inner City Outings would have to meet the same criteria as a rock climbing leader in the rock climbing section of the chapter. Or, a boating leader in the river touring section, and so forth.

This summer the Bay Area chapter is going to make a major expansion into a white water rafting program. They've already purchased the boat, and their leaders are being trained by some existing Sierra Club river trained leaders and some commercial outfitters. I know for a fact that the leader standards are going to be really tough. People are going to have to have advanced first aid, they're going to have to have water safety training, they're going to have to have CPR. They're going to have to demonstrate on the river a number of times that they are skilled in handling boats and controlling groups and anything else. I'm personally pretty excited about that program.

Adams: Sounds wonderful.

LaBoyteaux: I think we'll be able to reach a number of people that we haven't been able to reach, not only handicapped people, but also maybe groups that were hesitant to get involved in the five-mile hike, even a three-mile hike.

Adams: That should be very challenging. River trips are challenging in and of themselves, let alone the inter-personal aspects of it. What kinds of problems have occurred with leaders? Have there been particular trips in which there have been problems? Have there been leaders who've dropped out of the program because it was too difficult?

LaBoyteaux: Well, right off, maybe if I really rack my brain I could think of it, but I can't really think of anybody who made it to the point where they were a certified leader and then had a bad experience and quit. I can certainly think of people who became interested in the section who went with us for a time or two and decided it wasn't for them. Probably most of the leaders that we lose, we just lose due to natural causes--people move out of the area, family responsibilities take over more of their time, their interests maybe go off on another angle or something.

Of those leaders who have been leading from the very beginning of the ICO in the Bay Area, I think we're still in contact with most of them. And most of them still lead occasionally, although some of them lead quite a bit less than they used to lead in the early years. And the only people that we've lost contact with have been the people that have just really moved far out of the area. We try to even keep touch with them, hopefully they'll start a new ICO somewhere else.

#### The Trip Experience

Adams: I presume that you've led trips yourself. About how many trips have you led?

LaBoyteaux: I don't know for sure, I think it's somewhere between sixty and seventy trips over maybe a five or six-year period.

Adams: Could you tell me something about the trips that you've led? For example, what has been the reaction of some of these groups to the experience of being out in the wilderness?

LaBoyteaux: I'm hesitating because every person that goes on the trip has-- it's a personalized experience. I guess I can say a couple of

LaBoyteaux: things. We're dealing primarily with urban people here. A common first time reaction for urban people is what we call the "bear, bug, snake, and bathroom" syndrome. Those are the four main fears. If we can get by those four main fears people have a great time. You can't get over it in one trip. You've got two to three trips at least, and probably several trips--trips over a period of years with the same group.

The first group that I worked with in Inner City Outings was a group here in the Mission District called Centro Latino. I remember that we put up a sign-up sheet on the wall of the recreation center, and I think we had five sign-ups. Then we had the pre-trip meeting, and we had three people show up, and the morning of the trip I think only two kids showed up for the trip. We went anyway, and those two kids came back and told the other kids about it, and so the next time we put a sign up we had ten. Five showed up for the pre-trip meeting, and five went on the trip. It went on like that till the point where we were borrowing the school bus, taking six Inner City Outings leaders and thirty kids, and when we got to the trailhead we'd divide into three groups of twelve and go to separate camp sites. It really turned into a major program.

The center itself--the Centro Latino--ran into some funding problems, and the program couldn't continue there so we were up the street and operated the program out of this kid's garage--it was on Potrero Avenue. There's really no financial support for these trips. Inner City Outings does have a local fund-raising program, and we will subsidize trips to a small amount, but it's never to the total cost of the trip. The agencies have to contribute something, whether that comes out of the kids' pockets or the parents' or the agency funds, whatever will make the trip go.

Well, these kids had no agency to work with anymore, so they started to run a recycling center in this kid's basement. They would haul in newspapers and cans and bottles and everything else, and then one weekend a month we'd take the truck down there and haul all the newspapers and cans and bottles over and sell them to the scrap dealer. We'd get the money and one of the kids was the treasurer and kept track of the money. And we'd have a trip when we had enough money, which was about every two months, I think. That was a very successful program and probably went on like that for a year or two.

About that point I went through a number of personal changes in my life, too and had to sort of ease off for a while. When I came back on the scene it was with another group in the Western Addition. To some degree I lost contact with the Potrero Avenue group, and I'm still sort of sad about it because it had moved from the point of my taking out a bunch

LaBoyteaux: of kids, to us all going out as a bunch of friends.

One of the trips that I remember most clearly with Centro Latino, and because of just one comment that was said by Kelly Torres, was the trip down to, I think, Joshua Tree National Monument; we did it over Easter, it was a ten-day or almost two-week trip, which is really an exception in Inner City Outings. Occasionally a leader will do that, but...We got the whole group together to load into the van, and I think we probably had fourteen people in one van for a two-day drive to southern California, which had to be trying in itself. I remember Kelly's comment was when everybody got out of the van "it looked like the United Nations was comin' to town." So, I really appreciated that. That's what Inner City Outings is about.

Adams: Do you currently lead trips?

LaBoyteaux: I haven't been able to lead as many trips as I used to because I've gotten more into the administrative end. I view that as being one of Inner City Outings' biggest problems right now: it's gotten fairly large; it's spread across the country, and there's a lot of administrative work that goes along with that. Somebody's got to do it. We're trying to convince the Seirra Club that they should give us some full time staffing to help us do that so that some of our best people who are getting sucked off into this kind of stuff can go back to leading. I've also been putting a bit of my energy into programs that I think will have the same net result, like the Urban Outdoor Adventure Center that I described to you. Mia and I are presently working with the Western Addition YWCA to develop the outdoor education component for their day camp and summer camp program.

I should probably expand on that a little bit. Inner City Outings has been requested from time to time to do all kinds of special programs: help train camp staff, train leaders from other agencies. We've even been approached by organizations like the Campfire Girls who you would expect would have outdoor skills. Strangely enough they did not, and they came to us to train them and to provide some of these kinds of experiences. The Sierra Club at large (of course it depends on the chapter you're in), particularly here in the Bay Area, does not have that many activities for youth. Since Inner City Outings works with a great number of youth, we're getting somewhat called on to provide activities for youth in the chapter--I don't mean just Inner City Outings, it's been all youth--to the extent that we've tried to find a couple of leaders and put them into the job of getting a youth section of the chapter started--Youth Outings Section.



LaBoyteaux: That's to our ultimate benefit, too, because we would prefer not to be viewed as a separate program--an outreach program. The problem with outreach programs is that they become a form of segregation unless there's a way to integrate the people you're working with into the mainstream of what's going on. The idea that Inner City Outings will ultimately just be absorbed into the Sierra Club is probably what we really want to see. But at this point it seems to still require a specific program, like Inner City Outings, to do this kind of outreach. I know I went off on a long tangent from what I started to talk about.

Adams: No, that's important, I think.

"Preserve, Protect, and Enjoy..."

LaBoyteaux: Now, you asked me if I'm going to be doing much leading. I am going to be doing some leading this summer. I'm scheduled to do several of the river trips, and I'm really looking forward to getting back into leading.

I did lead a trip last month. We took three groups up to the Stanislaus River, with other ICO leaders. I think I mentioned that before. We went into the Friends of the River encampment. In fact, while we were there David Brower floated down the river in a raft, and he had a news team with him, and they invited some of the people from the encampment to come up and float down the river on the raft. Five of the kids and assistant leaders from the Inner City Outings went up and floated down with David Brower. We were real excited about that happening. The people that went were real excited and not only did they get to see all the things that were being pointed out--the archeological sites and historic sites, native plants and so forth along the river--but they got to hear David Brower's historic perspective on preserving rivers and stopping dams.

My feeling is that Inner City Outings is being drawn more and more into conservation, too. I've always been sort of upset about this traditional division that seems to have arisen in the club, you know, between the outings people and the conservation people. I've never viewed myself that way, and I think most Inner City Outings leaders don't view themselves that way. By and large, I think if you talk to Inner City Outings leaders on conservation issues you'll find they probably find the Sierra Club too conservative--they're more radical than the club is most of the time.

Adams: Where does that division come from then?

LaBoyteaux: Well, I don't know how it got started. It's something that's been historic in the club, and it was there when I got there. I really don't know.

Adams: Would you then say that it's the conservation side who tends to view outings people as a separate group?

LaBoyteaux: I think both groups may view each other as a separate group, but I think I can certainly say that it's really a rare person in the club who is deeply involved in both aspects of the club, both conservation activism and leading outings. That seem very incongruous to me, I mean, the Sierra Club is, "preserve, protect and enjoy the scenic resources" and so forth. It seems to all go together.

#### Goals of the Inner City Outings Program

Adams: In terms of the Inner City Outings Program, do you feel that the goals or the philosophy of the program have changed since it was first founded?

LaBoyteaux: No. We've expanded, but the basic philosophy is that we're providing a wilderness experience to people who would not otherwise have the opportunity. That's been the steadfast foundation of the program since the beginning, and still is. We're getting asked to do more diverse things. We're being asked to provide, for instance, vocational information to people who come through the Inner City Outings Program to help them into careers in land management and conservation. As I said, we're being drawn into conservation to some degree.

Adams: So you would say that the desire to acquire political support from local community groups for environmental types of issues is a secondary aim of Inner City Outings?

LaBoyteaux: I don't think that very often even enters the minds of the people who lead for Inner City Outings. It may occasionally, but most of the people who lead and who are the officers in Inner City Outings are there because they want to share the experience, share the things they enjoy. But I think there are other people throughout the club that perhaps do view the Inner City Outings Program more in that light. They know that the club has been attacked as a white, elitest organization. They see plenty of non-white faces in the Inner City Outings Program, and they say, "Gee, that looks good for the club." I can't say what my reaction is to that totally. We've had

LaBoyteaux: some struggles with the club over the way that they have used the Inner City Outings Program. Some of the things that have been written seem like they have tried to get a lot of mileage out of us, but without giving a substantial amount of support.

Adams: For example?

LaBoyteaux: For example, there was a president's fund appeal a year or so ago and one of the key items in the fund appeal was a heading called "The Inner City Frontier." There was some wording underneath that "with adequate funding we can expand our Inner City Outings programs...." Well, when all the laundry got washed out there was no money for the Inner City Outings program; there never had been intended to be any money for the Inner City Outings program; everything went into the general fund. I don't think that's going to happen again. We raised a lot of noise about that--made it well known that we didn't like it, and we didn't want to be used. It was somewhat of a confrontation, but I think it was a confrontation with a positive outcome in that we started to have a lot more thorough dialogue with club leaders.

At least as long as I've been chairman that's been one of my goals, to try to inform and educate the club leadership that knew nothing about the Inner City Outings Program--and that's a large majority of the club leadership I think and probably a lot of the club members knew nothing about what we did. I mean, the humorous side: people call us up and say, "Don't you lead walks in the city? Inner city outings, you know?" Over the year--it's almost a year now that I've been national chairman--I've found, generally speaking, that club leaders are real supportive of the program. We're still waiting to see whether or not that vocal support of verbal support will materialize into, say, money for a staff position or just outright small grants to help us institute new programs in other parts of the country. But I'm feeling a lot better about it. I'm feeling like we're better known, that people are listening to what we're doing, that there's a lot of people in the club who feel what we're doing is real important, even if they acknowledge that they probably couldn't do it themselves.

Adams: What is your competition for funding?

LaBoyteaux: I have a copy of the club budget, which I've gone over, and I'm not sure precisely how to tell the board of directors what item they should cut in order to keep us in. We're not in the budget; we're trying to get in the budget. Of course, we are tax deductible. That means that they can get donations from outside sources and donors can write that off their taxes. And I know I talked to the club treasurer, Denny Shaffer, and

LaBoyteaux: Nick Clinch (executive director) of the foundation, who both feel that we should go in that direction, that is, try to raise outside tax deductible money to support ICO. When you pay your dues, the money that comes from that is called "hard money" which they can use for political purposes; we're clearly a non-political thing.

ICO, A National Program

Adams: How did you come to be the chairman of the national sub-committee?

LaBoyteaux: I know, you told me you were going to ask me that question. Well, okay, structurally it's an appointed position--it's appointed by the chairman of the National Outings Committee. The first ICO chairman was Sandy Knapp, who was appointed by the board of directors at the time the guidelines were set up. After eighteen months to two years Sandy said, "That's enough, and I need somebody else," and somehow or other I was in line.

Adams: So, who appointed you?

LaBoyteaux: I was appointed by John Ricker. Formally, I was appointed by John Ricker, chairman of the Outing Committee. I anticipate that I'll hang on another year or so, and I'd like to see the chairmanship go East. I think ICO has been a western program long enough. The club is becoming a truly national program; Inner City Outings is becoming a truly national program. We held a national meeting last February in Washington, D.C., because there were so many new groups in the East, and there were ten or twelve representatives from Inner City Outings groups there. I think that it's time that it goes East, next time.

Adams: You mentioned that you felt good about the state of things, that is, club support for the program. Do you feel that the commitment of the Sierra Club to the Inner City Outings Program is growing, is strong? Do you feel that the program will be around in ten years?

LaBoyteaux: I don't feel totally good about it. I feel it's moving in a positive direction. It's certainly better than it was a year or two years ago. They have yet to put their money where their mouth is. We wrote a blistering editorial in our newsletter complaining about what happened in the fund appeal, and I think that was the closing line of our editorial, "Come on, club, put your money where your mouth is." But, at least verbally,

LaBoyteaux: I'm getting a lot of understanding and positive responses from club leaders, so for that reason I think it's going in a positive direction. I hope you don't come back in a year, and I have to tell you that it all fell flat. (Laughs.)

Adams: I hope not, too. In your capacity as chairman, what do you do?

LaBoyteaux: Probably the biggest thing that I do is try to personally assist new groups when they get started in other parts of the country. That was one of the main reasons the board set up National Sub-Committee of ICO. It's really hard to imagine the struggles a new group that's starting goes through in the beginning, when they know absolutely nothing about running one of these kinds of programs. They don't know anything about the insurance coverage, leader certification processes, what they have to do. They just have some really dedicated person out there that says, "Doggone it, those people deserve a chance to get out, and I want to do it." So, I make every effort to get them all the information and support they need.

We have a small fund at the national level that I administer, and I try to sort of parcel out the money--a hundred dollars here and two hundred dollars there--to assist these groups. We have a national newsletter. Mia Monroe is the editor of the national newsletter. That comes out two or three times a year. I try to solve problems that groups are having, whether it means, say, their relationship with their chapter or just some sort of procedural thing. And, I guess, I'm in some ways the overseer of a lot of these new ventures that we're expanding into like the vocational information program.

We've gotten called on in the last two or three months to do a number of presentations. We sent representatives to the City Care Conference in Detroit that was co-sponsored by the club and the National Urban League. We did a fairly major presentation to the Western Interpreters Association, which is park ranger staff people who are wanting to hear our point of view about how to get non-traditional people--park users--into the parks. We've attended conferences on wilderness and park access for handicapped people. There've been a number of these things that we're called on to do.

#### Trip Leaders and Leadership Styles

LaBoyteaux: I think Pat Colgan has pointed out that what we deal with on these outings, time and time again, is just human relationships. It's not just taking a group of city people out into the wilderness and teaching them about conservation. There are innumerable

LaBoyteaux: things that arise on these trips that just occur because of the clashes of the differences in cultures; to deal with that kind of a situation is the skill that an Inner City Outings leader has that other club leaders may not have. So, when I'm talking about an education process for club leaders, and I'm getting a positive response, I think it's that a lot of club leaders are realizing that while in principle they support the program, they themselves would not be appropriate people to do it. It takes, all I can say, is a special kind of person to do it, and I'm sure if you met a whole bunch of Inner City Outings leaders you would find there's a whole lot of characters. Every leader has a different style. Some leaders can lead a very structured trip, and because of the nature of their personality, it can fly. Other leaders can lead a very loose trip but also, because of some quirk of their personality, they demand respect when respect is needed, an item of safety or something like that.

Adams: What is your style and why do you think it works?

LaBoyteaux: (Laughs.) I try to emphasize adventure. I guess philosophically I think that when we lose wilderness we're losing a lot more than just wild land, we're losing the call of the wild. I think that the call of the wild is a really important part of human development. I think you need to...I don't like the word "challenge" because challenge is this connotation of overcoming things, but it's the personal challenge to oneself, and that's what develops character and makes people more contributing members to their society and their community. It is the amount that we can develop character through these kinds of personal challenges. I didn't touch on that before, but I think that's one of the most important parts of any outdoor program, but particularly the Inner City Outings Program and other programs like it. And there are a lot of other good programs around. We're not in it by ourselves, by any means.

Adams: Were you pioneers, would you say?

LaBoyteaux: Well, certainly pioneers in the Sierra Club. No, I can't say we were the first people around talking about the value of the wilderness experience as far as the development of human character. Outward Bound was talking about that long before us...National Outdoor Leadership School, and even some of the traditional outdoor groups, the scouting programs. So, we're not the true pioneers in the field. Perhaps for every leader that takes out an outing--a group of inner city people--for the very first time going into the woods--they're pioneering something there certainly, in any case.

LaBoyteaux: I can remember just a couple of brief stories. One is a fella that has moved out of the area now but was probably one of our best leaders for several years. This guy's name was George Paul. George was very skilled at dealing with very troubled, difficult kids. He was a social worker by profession, add that on, but he also had real good wilderness skills and he could make the wilderness experience work.

The story I'm going to tell you is not about him dealing with troubled kids, with difficult kids. He helped me on a very simple trip with a group of Campfire Girls that didn't have any leaders. There was one young girl on the trip who was an epileptic, and she was catered to by her parents and by all the other kids in the group. Every time she had a problem they would go and take care of it for her, and consequently she was not learning to be independent in any way. George psyched that through, I think within an hour of meeting the group, as to what was going on there. So he gave her no special attention. As they hiked up the canyon there were several streams to cross, and she fell in every one and got her sleeping bag wet, and George would not help her out of the stream and would not let anyone else help her out of the stream. They got to the camp, and she was shivering cold, and he made her go and change, would not let anyone help her change. And I understand that on the return trip it was a similar situation. There were a lot of falls, minor falls, and he made her do it. But when they got back to the trailhead he said to her, "Now, I hope that I haven't been too hard on you." And her response was, "I'm really glad you did it; it was the best thing for me." That's one story that I remember a lot, I really like.

I had a similar, but not quite so dramatic, experience on a ten-day trip I made into the Marble Mountains. I had a young man on the trip who was pretty overweight, probably had not too good a self-image, and he was always at the end of the line. I was learning too, then, and we were going up a steep ridge and I was right behind him all the way: "Come on, Carl, you can do it; you can make it. I know you can do it..." and so forth. Every ten yards in the trail: "Oh, I can't do it, I'm gonna sit down." "Naw, you can do it, get movin', get movin." And there was this constant verbal stress between him and me going up the hill. We went over to the next basin, and we were there for a day or two. When we came back over the same ridge, I said, "Well, I'm not going to let this happen again; I'm going to try a different tack entirely." So we got to the bottom of the hill, and I could almost see the look in his eyes, and I said to him, "Okay now, I'm not gonna leave you, You sit down and take a rest any time you want, and don't worry, I'm not going to leave you behind. And there

LaBoyteaux: won't be any problem." And so he started up the hill, and I think in the first hundred yards he stopped once, and I think it was more to see what I was going to do than anything. I didn't say anything, and he said, "Is it okay to take a rest?" I said, "Sure, take a rest, I don't mind." Then he got up, and and started going and went all the way up to the top of the ridge without stopping. When he got to the top, he turned around and said to me, "I didn't think I could do it." I said, "Well, see, you did it." (Laughs.) "You know, now you've got something to remember when you get home."

It's little things like that. We get asked a lot of times whether we have discipline problems dealing with kids. Oh, in sixty trips maybe I've had one severe discipline problem with one kid. So it's really a rare thing. I could tell you stories all evening; mine aren't the best, cause I don't think I'm the best leader in Inner City Outings, by any means. Probably some of the people, if you interviewed Jorge Paz or Madeline Pyeatt, I think they're some of the best leaders around.

Adams: Were they Sierra Club leaders first? Are there any individuals who've come from the community?

LaBoyteaux: Jorge Paz, certainly was not a club member when he got into the program. Madeline Pyeatt, I don't know if she was a club member before or not. There are a few leaders that definitely came up out of the community. Now, we've only been going eight years, so we're just now starting to see a real result from that; we're starting to get a number of people who started out as kids on our trips a few years ago and now are adults and are ready to take on assistant and leading roles. So I think the program will snowball. They make the best leaders.

Adams: I bet.

LaBoyteaux: The best possible leaders, you know. They leave us lookin' like a bunch of old fogies.

Adams: So that's always been an integral goal of the program, to get those people involved.

LaBoyteaux: Absolutely. Back in Philadelphia, I went back to Philadelphia before I went to Washington, Tony (Thiel) took me down through some of the community agencies he works with and some of the really depressed areas of Philadelphia. They call him "Mr. Sierra."



Relations with Community Agencies

Adams: That's great. I wanted to ask you, in connection with your relationships with local agencies, community groups, have there been any instances where it didn't work out, where there's been opposition or bad feelings?

LaBoyteaux: Every leader has his bad trip now or then; I've had bad trips, other leaders tell me they've had bad trips and whether that just means they got washed off the side of the earth because they got in a torrential rain storm or whether it means that they had a few more interpersonal problems on their trip than they were successfully able to deal with...It's the exception, not the rule when that happens. I've not personally encountered an agency I couldn't work with, but I know of a couple leaders, I think Pat Colgan was one. There was an agency in the Mission District called Mas Vida, and I remember Pat telling me that this group was just more militant than he could deal with. And I don't know specifically what he meant by that.

Adams: But in your experience you've never...

LaBoyteaux: No, I've never had a group that I was not able to work with, and I think most of the leaders haven't had that problem. We try as best we can to match leaders with groups. Now Mia and I and some other people did some trips about a year ago with the Black Panther Party School in Oakland. That program was going along fine until Huey Newton came back, and then all their energies went into Huey Newton. It wasn't that they decided against us, I think they just forgot the outdoors, you know, because there was just a complete turnover in the Panther Party when he came back. Now I don't know if they'll get in touch with us again; I understand that the entire staff of the school there is turned over since he came back, too, which means that the people that remember us are probably now gone, too. That was a hard trip to lead.

Adams: The Black Panthers?

LaBoyteaux: We did it, but it was hard.

Adams: What was hard about it?

LaBoyteaux: I think part of the Panther School philosophy was that no one took any orders from white people at all. And so everything that I said had to be stated in an advisory sense. And to people who are new to the wilderness experience and just don't

LaBoyteaux: have the skills down, a lot of the things don't seem logical until you've done them a couple of times. And so I was totally in the role of the persuader and the suggester. It was tough. It was tough.

Adams: Can you give me an example?

LaBoyteaux: We went to the same spot on both these trips deliberately because I wanted the people from the agency--we took a preliminary group up and then we took a larger group up--to know where they were going and know what to expect when they got there so that they could participate in the leading of the trip more. And when we got to the campsite the second time I suggested that perhaps the campsite was a little small for the size of group we had; I didn't think there were enough sleeping places for everyone to be comfortable. That suggestion wasn't accepted, and they did sleep at the exact same spot we had before; I had suggested a place several hundred yards away. As a result some people slept on slopes and rolled off their insulite pads and got cold because they rolled off their insulite pads. Those are the things you learn.

Adams: So did you just do one trip with them then?

LaBoyteaux: We did two trips. I would've liked to do more trips. I would've liked to continue. Like I said, when Huey Newton came back the Panther Party just changed totally. I'm a little hesitant to tell that story because I think it's more exceptional, maybe, than most of our trips.

Adams: I wanted to ask you about one of your reports in which it says that you like to have two leaders from the community on each trip. Is that a general rule? Are you able to get...

LaBoyteaux: Not always. We like to, particularly if we're dealing with a youth group. We end up talking about youth a lot, but we don't strictly do youth outings; we do anyone who would not otherwise have the opportunity, but a lot of the groups we do have worked out to be youth groups. If we have a community agency staff person--a representative of the community--they will already know the other people. Particularly if it's youth, just someone there that knows everybody in advance makes things a lot easier. They know that this particular kid has a particular kind of problem and can clue us into that; it's much easier than trying to sort it out for ourselves. But the worst possible experience that I can think of on a trip--I think I've had it once--is when we invited a community agency staff person and that person really disliked the experience and consequently gave a negative impression to everybody else on the trip, and it just became a real bad trip. So in that case, I'd just rather take the kids myself.

Adams: Disliked hiking and just the physical...?

LaBoyteaux: Yes, disliked hiking and disliked being in the woods. Probably a lot of times I think when people have a reaction like that, it's usually fear. It's so unfamiliar, it's fear. So the person feels like they're under a great deal of stress and they act like it--stressfully, like we all do when we get uptight. The perspective gets skewed and you become more tense and all this sort of thing. There's no reason to be tense at all, but if you really think there's a bear or a snake or something out there you can understand why you'd be tense.

You were asking me the relative advantages between the short weekend-type trips or longer trips, and we're locked into mostly the weekend-type trips because all of our leaders are volunteers, and they have regular jobs, and they can only afford to do it on weekends. Occasionally, as I mentioned before, a leader will give a week of his vacation or in the case where the leader is professionally employed in some community service, he may be able to do a longer trip because he can do it as part of his job. But, for the most part, they're weekend trips. If I had my way, I would do all two-week trips. Maybe an introductory day hike or something in the beginning, but mostly long trips. I'm sure you can accomplish as much on a single two-week trip as you could on six months of our weekend trips.

Outward Bound, of course, and Outdoor Leadership School do the longer trips; in fact, the Inner City Outings Program in Thermal, California, does that type of a program. However, they're structured a little differently. The leader is a credentialed teacher and works for the school district and leads the trips as her job. So she can do two week trips. That's Pamela Johnson in Thermal. Overall, I think that probably works out better. If we had the manpower, we could do that all the time.

#### Volunteer Leaders: Foundation of ICO Success

Adams: Is there anything else that you'd like to say before we finish?

LaBoyteaux: I think that this is a program that's built on its volunteer strength. It certainly has not, at least up to now, received any substantial support from the Sierra Club. I don't want to minimize what particular office workers or particular chapters have done to help us. I think in a lot of ways they've done what they can, but as far as institutionalized support of the Sierra Club, we certainly haven't received that up to now.

LaBoyteaux: The cutting edge of the program is the volunteer who is out there knocking on an agency door or is willing to go into a totally strange place, strange neighborhood and meet people who are totally different from himself/herself and be excited about that, to find that as a real challenging experience. So, absolutely, the strength of the program is the individual leaders and the volunteers. And I'd sure rather go back to doing some of that than operating at the administrative level I do right now. That's where all the fun is.

I think maybe that's how I should finish up, too. I don't think anybody ought to lead for this program unless they have fun. There are some trying times, no doubt, but I think it's tremendously exciting. I like the challenge of it--I like the challenge of the outdoors, just because I like to feel the wind blowing through my hair and sleep under the stars, but there's also a tremendous challenge in just getting to know all kinds of different people, and I really love to do that. I make all kinds of new friends. I hope all the leaders approach it with that kind of an attitude, that it's just something they really enjoy doing.

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Sierra Club Oral History Project

Marlene Sarnat

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CHAPTER INNER CITY OUTINGS:  
LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR ICO

An Interview Conducted by  
Karen Kenney

Sierra Club History Committee  
1980

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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Inner City Outings, Sierra Club  
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## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Marlene Sarnat, one of the founders and first director of the San Francisco Bay Chapter's Inner City Outings Program, was interviewed on May 6, 1979, as one of a series of interviews on the Sierra Club and the urban environment. The interviewer was Karen Kenney, a student in the Department of History's graduate seminar, "Survey of Oral History," at the University of California, Berkeley. Ms. Sarnat was chosen to be interviewed for this project because of her involvement in the Inner City Outings program in its earliest days--her key role in conceiving the idea for the program and her administrative success in raising funds and enlisting trip leaders and supporters to turn that idea into an established Bay Chapter program.

Marlene was in her early thirties when she organized the ICO in 1969-70. She states that the idealism and energy she brought to this and other Sierra Club programs at that time grew in part out of her involvement in the anti-Vietnam War movement of the 1960s. Her interest in conservation and the urban environment is evident in her other Sierra Club activities as well. She has served on the Bay Chapter and Loma Prieta Chapter executive committees and the national Outings Committee, as the Loma Prieta Chapter representative to the Sierra Club Council, and as legislative delegate for the Northern California Regional Conservation Committee. She has expressed her special concern with land-use planning by serving on the city of Mountain View's Planning Commission and the Stevens Creek Trail Task Force, and as regional chairperson of the People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area for San Mateo.

Ms. Sarnat was cooperative in all phases of the interview process and reviewed the transcript for accuracy, without making substantive changes. Her interview gives an important perspective on the Bay Chapter Inner City Outings program.

Ann Lage, Co-Chair  
Sierra Club History Committee  
April 15, 1980



Sarnat: standards for leadership. And we ran into some other problems, I don't know if you want to go into them now or if you want to wait until another part of the tape.

Kenney: We can talk about them now if you feel comfortable.

Sarnat: Okay. The program had some very beautiful aspects. We watched kids from Chinatown who had been going out on Police Athletic activities, where, according to their stories, they had wound up scrambling for food, and who would come on our trips with little packages of food clustered away in their backpacks. After they had been out with us a couple of times, and we'd put all our food in a central area for the meals, we discovered that, one by one, these little packages of cookies, or candy, or something special, would start arriving for all to share. It was really very beautiful. There was a very nice opening up.

One of the nicest things I did, personally, was when the kids decided they wanted to participate in the food selection. We hoofed it off to Chinatown to the Oriental grocery stores and got some very special things that we could take on a backpack trip. We were able to learn how to buy and eat things they enjoyed, things I had never seen before, and this was very, very rewarding.

The problems that occurred, and this is why I mentioned that we were naive before starting, was that I had not realized what the problems were in the gangs in Chinatown. On one of the trips a very fine community leader, who was a beautiful person in all other ways, had brought a gun along. And, in the morning, when going on an overnight, at the first car camping site, he shot at a bluejay. He didn't shoot it, but he was making fun of it. I got up and went over to talk to him about bringing a gun on the trip. Later on we had another incident with a gun, and at that time I said they would have to keep people from bringing guns on the trip. Since they didn't feel that they could guarantee that, that ended the program.

Kenney: Was it a community leader who had the gun from the Chinatown group?

Sarnat: Yes, it was.

Kenney: Oh, I see. One of the older volunteers who was trained to lead the children on Inner City Outings?

Sarnat: He was not even one of the leaders that we were supposed to train; he was one of the paid staff from the Chinatown Community Center. And I might say, you may or may not want this on the tape, but he was slain awhile later in Los Angeles. Shortly after the program ended there was a radical change in Chinatown, and we

Sarnat: became less involved.

Kenney: Your having been personally involved was kind of a strain. Now, were these trips with the Chinatown groups in 1970?

Sarnat: I don't remember.

Kenney: According to the records it says that you began in 1970, so I thought that perhaps that was the date. Sometimes it's hard to remember these things.

When you worked with the Chinatown group, did you go to them, or did they come to you, when you were working with this Golden Gate Recreation Area?

Sarnat: They were invited to a meeting for the formation of a coalition of people to bring about the formation of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. They brought up the question of us helping them with the youth program, so they came to us at that specific meeting, and then we went to them.

Kenney: Did the Inner City Outings idea come out of this meeting with the Chinatown group? Or had it been going on in other Sierra Club Chapters?

Sarnat: The Appalachian Mountain Club was one of the programs which we heard about afterwards, and there may have been a Sierra Club group formed in Los Angeles, but in terms of being something that was being promoted throughout the club, I'm not aware of anything being in existence.

Kenney: So then your organization was the first Inner City Outings.

Sarnat: As an official Sierra Club outing that I'm aware of, yes, and as one that was used as a model to carry across the country.

#### Equipment and Funding

Kenney: You said that there was equipment provided for the youngsters on the trips. Did that equipment come from the Sierra Club or did you raise monies to acquire the equipment for the trips?

Sarnat: The money came from several different sources, but the National Sierra Club Outings program gave us some initial sums for the equipment. We raised some through some foundations. The Levi-Strauss Foundation gave us some money which was used for the trips.



Cooperation with Community Agencies

Kenney: Was the Chinatown group the only group you were directly involved with, in taking on the trips?

Sarnat: That was the start of it. At that point, Patrick Colgan, and Peter Perkins, and other people came into it and were interested in working with other groups. They got into Mas Vida, a Mexican-American group, and Peter started to work with a group of Indians.

Kenney: That was the group out of San Francisco.

Sarnat: That's right. At that point some of the time was spent going into the community showing people what was available if they wanted to participate, and other times they would get in touch with us.

Kenney: Oh, so sometimes you would go out to them, and ask them, and other times they would get in touch with you. Most of the time how were the funds raised, in the same manner you spoke of with the Chinatown group?

Sarnat: That's right.

Kenney: So there was some outside funding.

Sarnat: Quite often the community would have money, and they wanted to take the kids on outings, but they didn't know how to do it. So they would come to us and ask if we bought our equipment and perhaps provide transportation, they would supply their food.

Daphne Reece put together Your Bay Area to use as a fund raiser and sold quite a few copies, which were used both for publicity and fund raising to increase the size of the program. The slide show that Peter and Shirley Ewings put together was developed because it was felt that you couldn't just take the kids who had no experience in the outdoors, pile them onto cars and take them off. They had to have some understanding of what they needed and what they were getting into. And it was very useful and was also used for fund raising.

Initial Trips

Kenney: On the first trips that you went on, how far did you go away? Did you go to the Santa Cruz area or where did you take the

Kenney: Chinatown youth?

Sarnat: Mostly to the High Sierra.

Kenney: Which area in the Sierra?

Sarnat: Well, one of the trips we wound up spending our time in Hutchinson Lodge. The concept was to get the kids away from cars. Very early on we decided that we didn't want to car-camp, we wanted to backpack, with the idea that if you could get the kids totally away from their environment--you didn't want to be near radios, guns (laughter), whatever--you could get them turned onto the wilderness and maybe this could make a difference in their outlook.

Kenney: Did you have any of the children want to enter the Sierra Club afterwards? Was it effective in that way?

Sarnat: There were lots of things that happened. Earlier we talked a little bit about Youth for Service, a San Francisco youth group, which went on one of the earlier trips in an area near Lake Tahoe. It was an area that was particularly secluded; there were coyote and deer, and there may have been a bear. We were in an area that you hiked down into, and in the morning we hiked out.

As we were hiking out a couple of the girls who were lagging behind exclaimed, "They ain't got no right," and I said, "What are you talking about?" They said, "They ain't got no right. This land belongs to all of us. They don't have no right to take this land and chop it up and ruin the forest." It was very moving.

#### "Grandmother" of the ICO

Kenney: I would think that those types of experiences were rewarding for you. In respect to the title that you have sort of been given unofficially, "The Grandmother of the ICO," how did that term come about?

Sarnat: Well, I initiated parts of the program, and just turned over the reins with time. At the time that the Sierra Club Council was considering making it an official program, one of my friends, Becky Evans, was at the council meeting. I was a council delegate at that time, and as we walked out the door she said, "I guess you are feeling like a grandmother right now." And it was really very appropriate because I didn't feel like a proud parent, but a grandparent was a really good description. It

Sarnat: was a nice feeling.

### Interactions

Kenney: Going back to the ICO and the original goals and meeting the objectives, did you have cooperation with the community agencies in almost all of your experiences?

Sarnat: I would say yes. The gentleman who was very influential in getting the program off the ground, Frank Quinn, was then the San Francisco chairman for People for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, he was also the western region director of Equal Economic Opportunity, and he knew all of the community leaders. We actually spent time going around talking to them in terms of what we wanted to do, and everywhere that we contacted it was very positive. There wasn't any feeling like, "What are you trying to do to us?" It was more like, "Wow, here's something we can do."

It's a little unfair to borrow from other people's experiences, but Patrick Colgan had one experience that he later told me about. There was a kid that was doing very poorly in school. He seemed doomed to fail in everything that he did, but then he became a leader on one of Pat's trips. This was when the community leaders took notice of what the program can do. He found that he could succeed, and these different successful experiences than made a change in the normal environment he lived in. He started to succeed there, too.

Kenney: What types of objectives, to just sort of capsule them, do you feel the program had at the beginning?

### Early ICO Objectives

Sarnat: I had two personal objectives which may not have been the program's objectives. I thought it was important to get more people to have the opportunity in the wilderness where they could perhaps experience the pleasures that I had experienced, and perhaps it would affect their lives in a positive manner. I also felt that many Sierra Clubbers led an isolated existence and were not aware of the problems and the concerns that were going on in the inner city, and I felt that this would be a dual learning experience. The Sierra Clubbers could get involved with the inner city, and perhaps they would have more understanding of some of the problems that were facing these people. This could

Sarnat: be far more effective as a cultural exchange between these people.

Kenney: That's interesting. That's not a stated objective.

Sarnat: As I said, it's more of a personal objective, it was not one of the program's objectives. Towards that end some of the other leaders, who I think shared the objectives, worked with me on some bus camping trips. These were joint chapter bus camping trips and ICO trips with the result that there were more people to work on a one-to-one relationship with the kids.

Kenney: Do you think that that was a change that led the Sierra Club members to have a better cultural understanding, say for instance, of the Chinatown gang?

Sarnat: I think one of the things that I discovered early on was that you shouldn't think in terms of numbers, you had to think in terms of an individual and an individual experience. I pretty much decided that if one kids' life was affected by what we were doing in a positive way, the program was worthwhile. I think that when you look at the other side of the cultural exchange you have to sit there and smile. Every person I know that got involved in the leadership had a tremendous amount of satisfaction and gratification from it. A lot of people who got involved would never expect that they would get help in any way.

One of the things that I remember the most was hearing the story of one of our middle class leaders, a very nice guy, who came back from a trip grinning from ear to ear. When asked what had happened, he said, "By God, today they called me a nigger; I really made it." (Laughter). And that was the feeling of the true acceptance, because the kids would use the term with one another, and here they had called him that. He really felt like he was one of the crowd.

So, yes, I would say that it was very successful in both ways. I don't think that we've necessarily changed society in general; it's just that I think that we've made some changes in individual outlooks. It was very nice.

Kenney: I know that one of the stated objectives is to have this kind of interrelationship with the community. Quite often it states that the idea is almost for the Sierra Club person to be psychologically oriented with the children. Did you feel that that was one of the original objectives?

Sarnat: I guess that we're getting into a semantics problem because I don't really know what you mean by that. The feeling was that the leaders had to be understanding of where the kids were coming from: they couldn't impose middle class standards on the kids, but

Sarnat: they also had to be sensitive to the environment that they were bringing the kids into and know how to bridge the gap. I guess one of the things that comes to mind was hearing the story about a leader who was following one of the kids on a trip who was peeling an orange and throwing the orange peel hither and yon. The leader was picking them up, and not saying a word. Finally the kid turned around and said, "Why are you worrying about doing that in such a dirty place, with dirt all over?" And then they say down to cook some hot dogs and the leader brought the point home. Just as she was getting ready to eat the kid was worried about the area being clean. Now she didn't want it to be a dirty place.

I guess what I'm attempting to say is that the values were the values of protection of the wilderness, but the kid wasn't jumped upon, it was done in a sensitive way, and the example was found later to bring it home to the kids rather than, you know, putting in a whole bunch of constraints, saying you can't do this, and you can't do that.

Which brings up another thought and that is that I have seen these kids go on trips where on the way in they're throwing cigarette butts and paper around, but at the end of the weekend they're running all over the place to pick up as much paper as they can. One weekend had made an effect on a lot of them.

Kenney: I think that what I was trying to get at was that say, for instance, if there was a personal problem with one of the children, and that happened to be manifested during the trip, did the leaders feel that it was their responsibility to try and deal with them and that problem and talk to them about the different psychological problems that they were having of their own that happened to come out on the trip?

Sarnat: I'm not aware of anything. What I'm hearing makes it sound like more of a counseling thing.

Kenney: I'm sorry. Did they counsel the kids?

Sarnat: Not really, only in the sense of somebody like Patrick being very sensitive to the fact that he had a kid who was coming out of school where he couldn't do anything right but that he had other leadership abilities, being very sensitive he put him in a leadership role. But that's not counseling, I mean, that's just being very, very sensitive to these kids.

Opposition and Support

Kenney: On the other hand, did you have any opposition to the early programs? For instance, from the community itself, or from the participants themselves, or from the Sierra Club members?

Sarnat: The resistance from the Sierra Club was more in terms of: "Why are we getting involved?" Is this any area that we should get involved in? We're worried about preserving the out-of-doors. We really want to learn about the environment. Is bringing more people into the environment a mistake?"

The answer that most of us had was that there was a big emphasis on youth going on, that most of the groups would manage one way or another to bring the kids, if not into the wilderness, certainly to the parks. And it was to everyone's advantage to get them into the circumstances where they would begin to share the values that we feel are appropriate: respect and preservation of the wilderness. And I think that we did that. There may have been some opposition from the community that I didn't know of.

Kenney: So no one opposed you directly? Most of the Sierra Club sounds as if they thought it was good.

Sarnat: Most of the agencies had adults who were interested in getting involved in the program. Quite often the adults were turning around faster than we would have wanted, so that you worked with them for a couple of trips and then they were gone. Most of the programs that were set up were not a one-shot deal, but we had meetings to try to get them to the point that they could handle the kids on their own. I remember one trip Peter Perkins led for the Indian community. When he returned he said there was something very wrong with our society when Anglos were now in the role of teaching Indian children how to build fires. I feel that by and large we had positive experiences.

Kenney: Did you feel that the Bay Chapter yielded support to you, besides the fact that there were philosophical differences in the early stages?

Sarnat: It's hard to think back that many years ago. I don't recall that there was much conflict.

Kenney: Have you been associated with them at all in the last few years?

Sarnat: No.

Kenney: When did you stop working with them?

Sarnat: Basically when I left San Francisco and moved to the Loma Prieta Chapter. At that time there was a group actively getting a program started there, and I didn't feel that it was necessary for me to

Sarnat: continue participating in it.

Kenney: So how long approximately did you work with the ICO? Five years...?

Sarnat: I don't know.

#### Rewards and Misadventures

Kenney: That's okay. What would you say is perhaps one or two of the most positive experiences that you had working with the program, some of your fondest memories?

Sarnat: I think there are a few things that I already mentioned. One is the trip with the Chinatown group to the grocery stores. I remember one trip where one of the members brought along his young son, who was not quite as high as most of the boulders. He must have been maybe seven years old at the time, and he was a very sturdy little hiker. He would go over to where we were struggling to put one foot on a boulder, and he would pull himself up with his arms. A couple of the teenagers were about to say that they couldn't do it because it was too difficult until they would look at him and feel so intimidated to see that some little kid could do it. He put everyone else to shame. That was kind of fun.

The two girls at Lake Tahoe, I think was a very rewarding experience. I think that the whole thing to me is blended into a very positive period of time. There was a lot of work, but it was a very rewarding experience. I am very pleased that I got involved.

Kenney: What kind of activities did you actually do on a typical outing? For instance, swimming, hiking, mountain climbing, or is it a little bit more relaxing?

Sarnat: It was more just a standard backpacking trip, but we usually tried to get far enough in that nobody felt they could walk back to the cars that evening. The trip I was referring to with the little boy was a trail trip, it wasn't a mountain climbing trip. It was just that he was so little that what for adults was just a normal height was a pretty good challenge, and he was right up there in front, and he sort of intimidated everyone. It was Armando Mendical's son. And that was something that worked out very nicely, when a couple of leaders brought their kids on the trips.

Kenney: On the other side of the coin is there any particular negative experiences that you had?

Sarnat: Yes, we had one very unfortunate incident, and that was a trip that I was leading to take a group of kids to Lock Levan Lakes. It was a group from Chinatown, and everyone was supposed to be in good health and good shape, and we went up to the lake. It was fairly hot but not too terribly hot, and I had intended to go on to a higher lake. When we got to the lower lake the guys were all sitting around, and the other leader was sitting with them. They had made up their minds that they wanted to go swimming. They were all rested, and I asked if everyone knew how to swim, and they said, yes they did. The girls said that they would swim at one part of the lake and the guys at the other part of the lake.

We had a very unfortunate incident. We lost one of the youth in a drowning. It was very peculiar in that it was a lake which you could walk across, but it had one deep hole. We were fortunate enough that there was a fellow trained in lifesaving in the area who came and pulled him out, but nothing could be done.

Again, the kids acted very heroically because before we got help, none of us were willing to determine that this kid was gone, and they all lined up and gave mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, and then carried their friend out of the area. It was a very tragic event, it was not one that I would want to see again, and yet I thought the kids had handled themselves in an outstanding fashion. The only reason this boy was swimming at all was that they were from San Francisco, well trained in the buddy system in swimming, and a friend of his had wanted to swim. So he agreed to go in and swim with him. The only thing that we've been able to figure out in retrospect was that perhaps he had a heart attack, or pulmonary edema or something else.

Kenney: But you didn't follow it up?

Sarnat: No. One of the things that we had worried about was whether or not the family would think that we were negligent. I received a very nice card from the family saying that they understood what had happened. It was very moving.

Kenney: I would imagine so. There weren't any negative repercussions from the Chinatown community?

Sarnat: No. As a matter of fact, when I met with the Chinatown leaders afterwards, I thought that maybe something terrible would be said, or done. But I found that they had also talked with the family, and they were very understanding.



Kenney: And the Sierra Club, what was their reaction?

Sarnat: They didn't want to cause any disturbances.

Kenney: Maybe you could describe for me the leadership qualifications of the earlier program.

Sarnat: The leaders had to be Sierra Club members. They had to have Red Cross training. They had to like kids, and they had to have the type of flexibility to be able to work with populations that they weren't familiar with, without getting uptight. We sent people out as co-leaders. If they did well, and if the person who was leading the trip thought that they were ready for it, then we would basically allow them to take their own group.

We also had very good cooperation with the Bay Chapter and from the national Sierra Club in particular, in that they allowed the leaders to get involved in the national backpacking training. Those types of things were very helpful. The national Sierra Club also invited us to go to the Nature Wilderness Workshop, I think it was called, which was held in the Sierra. It was extremely helpful because it sort of turned you on to "How to Look." That's when the leaders could make a contribution, where they could get the kids more involved in looking at what was going on. So I would say we had tremendous cooperation from the Sierra Club.

#### Inner City Outings Leaders

Kenney: Were there any incidences where the leaders didn't measure up to the qualifications, or for the most part was the co-leader experience sufficient for them to be ready to go on?

Sarnat: I think most of the people who, after a co-leader experience, wanted to lead a group were ready to do it. Many of them felt they wanted to continue as co-leaders. I think this is certainly true within the Sierra Club itself; not everybody decides they want to be a leader.

Kenney: At that time was the ICO primarily youth-oriented?

Sarnat: Yes.

Kenney: And you worked with adults?

Sarnat: Adults in the sense that the community leaders were involved with the trips.

Kenney: You didn't have any trips where you took out older adults, or family groups?

Sarnat: Not that I'm aware of at this time.

Kenney: And at that time were you working with the handicapped at all?

Sarnat: No. There were some other people that were taking out, for instance, the blind and the deaf, but they weren't at that time part of the ICO.

### Publicity and Policies

Kenney: How did the Inner City Outings become recognized in the community besides the fact that you went out and contacted people, and the slide show? Did you have any major publicity types of schemes?

Sarnat: We had Your Bay Area, which was originally designed as a fund raiser. The original concept was that we were going to get some money to translate it into Spanish and Chinese. It was going to be given to all the kids. In the front it had little blurbs on how to hike in the woods. That was to have been a publicity thing,

There were some announcements on the radio about the program. In a sense the hearings for the Golden Gate National Recreation Area were a form of publicity, and then there were attempts to get things into other chapters' newsletters. And the slide show went to other chapters.

Kenney: They used the same slide show everywhere?

Sarnat: That's correct. Then a number of groups developed their own slide shows. Some of the group just put in particular slides that they thought were more appropriate for their clubs.

Kenney: I want to touch on some of the other policies. Could you describe the insurance policy for the youth?

Sarnat: We were aware of the fact that quite often families did not have money for insurance. Since the club's insurance which we all used only covered the leaders, it was decided that the kids should have their own insurance. And in checking around with various insurance companies, we found that there was an insurance company that would write a flyer for a two-day outing, that was very inexpensive; at that time it was something like a quarter a day. It would cover the kids if anything happened,

Sarnat: whether they got bit or broke a bone, or whatever. It was put in as a mandatory Sierra Club policy for ICO trips.

Kenney: Are there any incidents that you can recall where you had to fall back on the insurance?

Sarnat: No.

Kenney: So generally nobody became sick, or broke any bones or anything else?

Sarnat: Not that I'm aware of. There may have been with other groups.

Kenney: It's a little unclear in my mind when you finished working with the program. When you moved to Loma Prieta district--is that when you stopped working with the program?

Sarnat: Pretty much,

The "Grandmother" Retires

Kenney: Could you again describe for me the reason that you stopped working with the Inner City Outings?

Sarnat: I think that it was manyfold. I think that I had put in a lot of my efforts getting the program started. I had gotten a lot of rewards from it; my interests were changing. I was more interested in getting involved with other things. I went onto the Loma Prieta Executive Committee and became a council member. My interests were going off in different areas. I knew that the people in the Loma Prieta Chapter were doing an excellent job. They had their own program going, and there wasn't any reason for a carpetbagger like me to get started.

Kenney: Who did you leave the Bay Chapter ICO in the hands of?

Sarnat: I think that Patrick Colgan was pretty much in charge at that point, and Duff LaBoyteaux came in around that time also.

Kenney: So you worked directly with Duff and Mary Em?

Sarnat: They came in around the transition period. I did work with them.

Kenney: Do you mind if I ask what type of interests did you shift to? Were they Sierra Club interests?

Sarnat: I guess at one point I was the legislative representative for the chapter, and I got interested in that. I can't tell you more specifically what my interests were. I don't recall, other than the fact that it's part of my own characteristics. I get

Sarnat: involved with things very intensely for short periods of time, and then I move on to something else.

Kenney: This was sort of the right time to do it. Do you ever regret that you haven't worked with the program anymore?

Sarnat: No. I'm delighted that it has gone as well as it has. I think that it has brought into focus some really very interesting people, who have worked with it. I think that there has been a transition. I think that you find that many of us who have sort of gone through the program are now into other things. It takes a very intense type of commitment. There were just a lot of other things to do with my life.

Kenney: Well, thank you very much.

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Sierra Club Oral History Project

George Zuni

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CHAPTER INNER CITY OUTINGS:  
FROM THE INNER CITY OUT

An Interview Conducted by  
Shirley Moore

Sierra Club History Committee  
1980

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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Narrator Interviewer  
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George L. Zuni  
Signature of Narrator

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Name and address of Narrator

Accepted for the Sierra  
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5-7-79  
Dated

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5-7-79  
Dated

Sierra Club Inner City Outings Program  
Subject of Interview(s)

## INTERVIEW HISTORY

George Zuni greeted me at the door of his home, which is on a sunny street in East Oakland. He informed me that his mother and father were not yet home from work, but that his mother would be home shortly. George had been left in charge of his brothers and sisters that afternoon. It was apparent by the patient and loving attitude he displayed toward them that he was quite capable of such responsibility. After some discussion I decided to conduct the interview in a small room toward the back of the house away from the street noise and the after-school activities of his brothers and sisters.

George was enthusiastic and serious about the interview. He is an articulate speaker who during the interview was quick to clarify any points that he thought might be misunderstood as reflecting adversely on the ICO program. It is clear that George's experiences with the program have been positive. He obviously felt it was an honor to be asked to discuss the Sierra Club's Inner City Outings Program and his participation in it.

At the conclusion of the interview George, with his ever-ready backpack, demonstrated a new technique (learned from Jorge Paz) which made it easier for him to hoist the pack onto his back. In addition to that, he showed me some samples of art work he had done with ICO and some photographs he had taken of past ICO trips. Mrs. Zuni arrived just as I was preparing to leave. She expressed her enthusiasm about ICO to me, and indicated that she was pleased with George being interviewed. Mrs. Zuni said she was anxious to read the transcript and graciously offered to transcribe the tape for me if I could not get to it right away. I promised that I would transcribe it as quickly as possible so that George would have a chance to edit it before he left for his next trip with Inner City Outings, which he was already planning.

Shirley Ann Moore  
Interviewer  
May, 1979



## FROM THE INNER CITY OUT

George Zuni's Introduction to Inner City Outings

- Moore: This is an interview with George Zuni, who is a fifteen year old student at Fremont High School. Is that correct?
- Zuni: Yes.
- Moore: And you're in the tenth grade?
- Zuni: Yes.
- Moore: You were referred to me as a participant in the Sierra Club's Inner City Outings Program by Jorge Paz. He told me you would be a very good person to talk to about your experiences in the Inner City Outings Program. First of all, can you tell me how you became aware of the Inner City Outings Program?
- Zuni: Inner City Outings is a branch of Sierra Club, and I never knew about Sierra Club. This was at Hamilton Junior High School last year. I started a year ago. I was in the hallway and I had an Indian decal on my sweater, and (Jorge Paz) said, "Oh, are you Indian?" I said yes, and he said, "Would you like to come on a trip with me? I like to have different backgrounds on my trips." I said, "Sure." So I went on that first trip, which was in November of 1977, up to the Sierras and I liked it. Then I went almost every weekend after that. And I've kept on going.
- Moore: Is Jorge Paz a teacher at your high school?
- Zuni: He was a teacher's aide. And he also took our trips every weekend, every weekend.
- Moore: Is he Indian also?
- Zuni: No, he's Cuban. But he claims to be my brother, and I'm the same way.

Moore: Very good; go ahead.

Zuni: I just met other people in the Sierra Club: Duff LaBoyteaux. I've gone with some of the better leaders in the Sierra Club: Tom Pillsbury, who is really, really up in age and about the best leader I can think of in the Sierra Club. And Patrick Colgan. And just meeting other people and learning a lot from them. Just learning and learning.

### The First Trip

Moore: Were any of your other classmates part of this first experience with you?

Zuni: Oh, yes, there were a lot of them. Some of them said, "Oh, you're crazy. It's freezing cold out there. Look at the snow; my fingers are turning blue." Well, that's what it is, to go out there and see if you can be with nature and match it and try to be as comfortable as you can. There are a lot of them now still going who went on the first trip with me. Two of them, Greg Porteous and Doug Coleman, still go. Greg went last weekend. He's Irish and a lot of the other leaders are Irish. We just all seem to get together all well. There is no race or anything to block it.

Moore: Were you a little concerned that there might be some kind of difficulty with so many different cultures and races represented?

Zuni: Well, seeing how I'm native American Indian, a lot of people kind of look toward me in a different way, as I found. But then it just somehow turned out there was no problem. It didn't bother me. The thing that bothered me though, was that I heard about the snow up there. 'Cause I'm from New Mexico, and we have six feet of snow, but thirty-foot drifts are something else. That is a lot of snow. Nothing bothers me. It just worked out well, and it's still working out.

Moore: What did your family think of your getting involved in the Sierra Club?

Zuni: I didn't want to go the first time 'cause I didn't really have anything; but my mother (Irene) and father (Levi) took me out to buy a whole lot of stuff. They said, "You should try it." I had just come out here to Oakland, California, maybe a year before that, and I wasn't too happy out here. There was nothing I liked to do. I do like mountaineering. So now they're still telling me to go.



- Zuni: I just received a scholarship from Outward Bound, and now my mom's starting to say, "Don't tell me anymore." I tell her about us hanging off cliffs and going up ice. And she says, "If you tell me any more I'm not going to let you go." As a joke she says that, but she still encourages me to keep going and keep on trying. When I don't go, she asks, "How come you're home this weekend?" I don't think she's throwing me out of the house, but she always asks me.
- Moore: Are your brothers and sisters interested in what you're doing?
- Zuni: Oh, yeah. My whole family is. They don't like to go as far into it as I do. We go to Point Reyes and hike around up there. I take them on some pretty steep climbs. When my mother gets up there she says, "Oh, who's going to drive home?" And my sister, she's one year younger than I am, goes on trips with ICO. We were raised in the same way. She likes it more than my younger brother and sister. I have one brother and two sisters and I'm the oldest. (My youngest sister, Anna, age 9; my only brother, Robert, age 11; my sister, Juanita, age 14.) It's good to start them now that they're young. They like it. They like to come home after being tired feeling their sore muscles and sit there. That's how I feel when I come home Sunday night, and I sit there. But my backpack is never unpacked. It's in the other room now waiting for next weekend.
- Moore: So you're always ready.
- Zuni: Oh, yeah.
- Moore: You say you were reluctant to go at first because you didn't have any camping gear.
- Zuni: Right. Another thing, I didn't know the city. The city was new to me. Where I was from we were open, and there was land all over and no people. In Oakland I used to stay in the backyard. I had a garden and a few animals, and I used to stay back there. Then I found out that we were going to be out where there was even less people, and I thought of that as good. I didn't want to go (at first). It didn't seem like anything to me. Then I got out there, and I wanted to go the next weekend and went to Point Reyes. And I can still name every trip I went on in order.
- Moore: So you're really enthusiastic about it now?
- Zuni: Oh, yes. I encourage everybody now. And it is getting kind of crowded out there. But there are only a few people who go out into the deep, deep wilderness.
- Moore: Tell me about the first trip. Where did you go?

Zuni: We went to a place called Loch Levan Lakes off Highway Eighty near Big Bend Ranger Station. It is about thirty-three miles west of Truckee (California). We got there at night and Mr. Paz said, "Let's hike in the night." And I said to myself, "Good lord, this man is crazy!" I was sitting there shaking. The temperature must have been at least forty-two or something. It was cold; it was dark. But I said, "Let's go." So we went. It was about four miles straight up. We got there that night, I couldn't believe I made it. The pack was really heavy. That next morning it seemed like I had been going for years and years because I gained all that experience that night and left everybody behind and went up ahead.

I didn't know we were going to lakes where there would be fish. I borrowed somebody's fishing pole. I caught my limit of trout, and the next day caught my limit of trout. Everybody just seemed to like me, and I just seemed to like them, and I just kept on going. There were a few people who said, "I think this is stupid, walking around with this pack and just torturing ourselves." I talked to a few of them and what I told them I guess made them not think of it as stupid. They liked it; they went on with the trip and enjoyed the rest of it. A lot of them have gone back. I didn't think I was going to live through that first trip. It was okay, I thought.

We got home, went to school the next day, and Mr. Paz asked if I wanted to go again. I said, "Sure." I enjoyed the second one even more. And still I go on the next trip, and I say, "Oh, this is the best trip." I go on another and say, "This is better." I still don't know which was the best.

Moore: On that first trip you mentioned that some other people were complaining, "Oh, we're crazy for doing this."

Zuni: Yeah!

Moore: How many people were in the group?

Zuni: There were eight students. There was Mr. Paz and two other leaders. The other two leaders were enthusiastic Sierra Club leaders. There were six kids, and two of them really thought, "What made me come out here anyway? It's cold; I could be at home watching TV."

Moore: Were there boys and girls?

Zuni: Yes, there were boys and girls, but the boys were complaining. The girls liked it. They thought it was really great. The girls though it was nice, but those two boys said, "Well, I'm staying here. You can pick me up coming back." But I said, "Oh, we're

Zuni: going a different way this time." Just made that up. And they said, "Well, I'm coming with you," and they followed us. Now one of them is one of the better hikers on trips.

#### Life in New Mexico

Moore: When you were in New Mexico, were you on an Indian reservation?

Zuni: Kind of. I lived right off of Isleta Reservation where my father is from. And I lived with my grandmother, too. We were right at the foothills of the Sandia Mountains and the Manzano Mountains. We were in a valley encircled by mountains. To our east, north, south and to the west we had mesas, you know, plateaus. And I used to go wild in the hills. Then I came out here, and there seemed to be more buildings than trees.

Moore: So you were used to wide open spaces and nature and being part of a natural setting?

Zuni: Oh, yes.

Moore: And you missed that?

Zuni: Oh, yeah. I go back almost every summer. So I think if I didn't go backpacking almost every weekend, I'd shrivel up and die.

Moore: Do you think you would have gone looking for the kind of nature experiences on your own if Jorge Paz hadn't stopped you that day at school in the hall?

Zuni: I probably wouldn't have. I might have even gone home. You know, back home. So I am kind of glad he caught me. He's done a lot for me. He's helped me get that scholarship with Northwest Outward Bound and just a whole bunch of other stuff. When I couldn't go on a trip, whether it was money or time or something, he'd wait for me; once clear 'til nine o'clock to go. I just thank him for that. I just kept on going.

#### About the ICO Leaders

Moore: Can you tell me a little more about the counselors in the ICO Program?

Zuni: You mean the leaders? Okay, ICO is Inner City Outings in the Bay Area, here to take out first-timers never out before. The president before was Duff LaBoyteaux, now the national president of ICO. I don't know the one now; there is a new one. I've been out with a lot of them. We just go out on different trips. It's just neat to see a lot of people who have never been out before. I like them to think of me as nuts to be out there, and after a while they come to you and ask you for help and how to do this and how to do that. At first you let them figure it out, and then when they really can't get it, you show them. Usually it's just once and they'll do it.

Moore: You mean, the new people?

Zuni: New people.

Moore: So do you consider yourself an experienced ICO member?

Zuni: I'd like to. I've co-led on a lot of trips. You can't be a leader legally until you're eighteen because of the insurance. I just like to help out, and a lot of people look to me for help. Wondering about this and that, but everybody helps each other on the trips.

Moore: Going back to your leaders on these trips, you mentioned that Jorge Paz would really put 100 percent into his leadership with you. Do you have any other comments on some of the other leaders?

Zuni: Yeah. The other man, Tom Pillsbury I was talking about, who lives in Berkeley. He's one of the greatest people I've ever met. He's, as I said, up in age but that doesn't bother him.

Moore: About how old is he?

Zuni: Gee, I don't know. Some people say he's eighty something. He flys airplanes just like flies fly around the house. He drives his car. He jokes a lot; he says he goes hang gliding off Glacier Point in Yosemite. I know I wouldn't but he does. He still goes snow shoeing. He carries just about the heaviest pack and goes to sleep late. Still we both get up at five-thirty and he does that all the time. He sits out in the cold and we drink coffee or tea to keep us warm. Get out in the rain and enjoy ourselves.

There is Patrick Colgan who lives down in La Honda. He's another good leader, close friend also. He's taught me a lot. He got me another scholarship to go on a trip this summer in July. A trans-Sierra trip from the west side over to the east side. It'll be about a sixteen day trip.

- Moore: When you say you've gotten a scholarship, you got the Outward Bound Scholarship, how do you go about doing that?
- Zuni: Well, they call it a scholarship but I think of it as a campership or something. For the Outward Bound, anyone could apply for that but then these other people here at the Sierra Club, these other leaders I mentioned, helped me out with it. They referred me. They were my reference people for this paper we had to fill out: "Do you think he's capable of all this? Is he a good person?" And they wrote good things about me. Then the other (Sierra Club) trip, Patrick Colgan is going to lead it. He wrote to (the Morley Fund) and I got a campership for that, too. I might not be able to make that trip 'cause I'll be working with YCC, the Youth Conservation Corps in Lake Tahoe, Or maybe over here in Fort Mason on the Marin coast. so I'm not sure where I'll be this summer.
- Moore: But it's yours if you want to take advantage of the scholarship?
- Zuni: Yes. He asked me, and I don't blame him, if I'm not going, to let him know so somebody else could use it, which I think is fair. So I'll tell him I haven't made my mind up (laughter).
- Moore: It's kind of early yet. You said that you considered the leaders your friends.
- Zuni: Um hm.
- Moore: Do you see them for other things other than going on the trips? Do you see them just in the course of the week?
- Zuni: No, as they work, I go to school. Duff lives in San Francisco, Tom in Berkeley and Patrick down in La Honda near Half Moon Bay. Mr. Paz lives in San Lorenzo, and he goes to school. Mr. Paz, we call each other just about every night. I call Tom and just keep in contact. Word passes around to each other. If something happens we call to find out if they're okay. We're a good group.

#### What the Wilderness Means

- Moore: It sounds like it. When you're backpacking what are your thoughts as you're going through the country?
- Zuni: Well, the first time I went to Yosemite...when we were in Yosemite Valley, my thoughts were then that I was always told about how short a time we are on this earth and that the earth can do without us. I now believe it can. I went there and saw these massive walls of granite; Half Dome, Basket Dome, Yosemite

Zuni: Falls, the Merced River, all the power. And I'm hiking and we're going up what they call Stairway to Heaven, a trail. And it just felt good to be there and to be part of nature, hoping it was accepting me. And I just felt good when we got to the top, and I felt that I could go on more and more. A lot of people seemed tired, but I knew they all felt the same. It just feels good to be out there and know you can hopefully live through it and live with it. You just feel good out there.

Moore: Do you have any friends or know anybody in your school or otherwise who think that the Sierra Club may not be a good thing for them? Do you know anybody who puts it down?

Zuni: Well, there is one friend at school who says, "I think the Sierra Club is good if they're going to save all the wilderness and all that, but I'll stay in my city 'cause I don't think I can stand the cold." But I don't know of anybody who has done it.

Moore: Getting back to what we were saying about some of your peers not wanting to have a wilderness experience.

Zuni: No, if I said that, I'm sorry. A lot of them want to go out and see how it is. I know of one girl, she said, "Oh, I think you Indians, no, not you Indians, I mean you Sierra Club people like to go out there and be in the wilderness and freeze your tails off." I said, "Oh, no, we go up there to be comfortable and enjoy it, so we do everything we can to enjoy it." She said, "I'd like to do it maybe only once. I might not like it, but I'd sure like to go out and see what it's like." She went out one time, and she's still going. She liked it.

There's one person that went, and the trick turned out to be the weather. Well, it wasn't with me but with other people. It snowed in June and I don't think too many people thought of that as great weather. A lot of them had cut-off pants and tennis shoes. No matter where we are in the Sierras, even if it's the Fourth of July, I have wool, my boots and good socks. I know. The Sierras don't fool me any more. Oh, they still fool me, but I know what's up there. We asked her if she wanted to come one more time. She came again and enjoyed that one. She goes now on and off. She enjoys it.

Moore: What good comes to you from ICO?

Zuni: I'm out there by myself a lot of the times. I can think to myself. If there is something wrong I can think more clearly there. You can find out what kind of a person you really are, the trust you have in yourself and other people. Like if somebody's belaying you up a mountain, you trust them. You don't want somebody up there that you think, "Oh, he's going to kill me and drop the rope if he doesn't like me." You learn to

Zuni: trust people, and you learn to depend on each other 'cause you need everybody in a group to make the trip run smooth, and you just think about it. You like the feeling. I do.

Moore: Do you think it carries over into your everyday life?

Zuni: How do you mean?

Moore: Does that kind of trust, that kind of feeling about trusting people carry over?

Zuni: Oh, yeah. A lot of people say I trust people too much. But why not? Give them a chance.

Moore: Who said that?

Zuni: There was this one person at school, and he asked if he could borrow my calculator or something. I said, "Sure, I'll need it by fourth period." He said, "Boy, you trust everybody, don't you?" He brought it back. Some people, I hate to say, aren't like that. Maybe they'll change. They might, like the weather, it changes. (Laughter.)

#### The Sierra Club

Moore: Do you think you'd like to get involved in the Sierra Club's other projects?

Zuni: Yeah. ICO is only a small part. They go river rafting; they have so many things. Like now we're protesting against that river in Stanislaus where it's being dammed up. It's too bad that that river's going. Hopefully, it won't, but it's filling up now. And I think they're planning to have a lot of people to go down there and just stand along the river. Either the river will rise and the people will move, or they'll stay there and hope the river stops. I don't know what happens yet, and I don't know when it's going to be. But I would like to be interested in all the other things.

Moore: Would you participate in a demonstration to stop the river from being dammed up?

Zuni: By all means.

The Typical ICO Participant

- Zuni: Now in the city, I go with ICO, we go on trips where only experienced people go, and I like those. Where it's rough and you hike fifteen or twenty miles a day with heavy packs for a long time. I like that too, but I also like to go with first timers.
- Moore: Do you think you're a typical ICO participant?
- Zuni: What do you mean by participant? A helper?
- Moore: Somebody who has been through the program, who goes on trips.
- Zuni: Oh, yeah. I think I got quite a lot more out of it than maybe some people did.
- Moore: Why do you say that?
- Zuni: Some city slickers here, they like the city; they don't care about our home, at least our real home. It can stay there; don't let it go away, but they'll stay here. There's a place for every person. They got a lot of experience; they learned a lot. Maybe they didn't want to learn about it. (It) taught them about all different kinds of plants and trees, why this happens, how come that's there. Just different kind of things. But I think I did learn quite a lot.
- Moore: Which would you prefer? To live in the city or to live in the country?
- Zuni: Oh, I can tell you that right now. Out in the middle of nowhere. I'd still like to be out in the middle of nowhere, wherever it is. I tell my mom, I'm going to move up to the Yukon, and she says, "Send me a postcard, I'm not going up there." (Laughter.)
- Moore: You're really involved with all these experiences. You've really taken them to heart.
- Zuni: I have dreams at night that I grow up, and I'm a ranger out in the middle of nowhere, and everybody's asking, "Why does there need to be a ranger out there? He isn't taking care of nobody." I dreamed at the same time this plane crashed in the snow, I can't remember it all, but I helped them out and they asked if I wanted to come move back down here. But I stayed. It was just a weird dream.



Bad Trips?

- Moore: Have you ever had any bad experiences on your outings?
- Zuni: What do you mean, bad?
- Moore: Anything you would consider not good. Something that went wrong, some kind of difficulties.
- Zuni: Oh, yeah. Well, not really. We were in the pickup. We had to sleep there that night because it was just raining. This was on a trip down in the Los Padres in November 1978. And somebody found twenty dollars. They didn't say anything, but during the trip one of the leaders told Mr. Paz, and he told me about it. We just kind of brought up the subject every now and then and talked about different things. In the end, that person showed it up. I really felt really proud of that person to bring it up and say that he found it 'cause he didn't steal it, he found it. Even the fact that he didn't say anything, but to show and tell that he found it was really something.
- Moore: Was there some kind of concern that he may have stolen it?
- Zuni: Well, I don't know what the feelings were of the people then. Maybe, I don't know. But all the trips I've gone on have gone just smooth.
- Moore: Not counting snowing in the middle of July?
- Zuni: Oh, that's the smoothest part! (Laughter)
- Moore: Do you think that when you're eighteen you'll still be participating in this program?
- Zuni: Oh, yes. 'Til I'm past eighty. Maybe not ICO, maybe I'll be into international trips or something. But I won't forget ICO.

Career Goals

- Moore: But going back to another question I asked earlier, you do see yourself becoming involved in the larger Sierra Club projects?
- Zuni: Oh yeah. I'd like to even become a ranger or anything to do out in the Forest Service.

Moore: So that's like a career goal for you? Would you say that the Sierra Club shaped that career goal? Would you have had that as a career goal two years ago, three years ago?

Zuni: Yeah, I would have, because when I was back home there were the mountains there, and the government was recruiting. They always liked to have the people from around there. You know, the Indians, and there were Mexican and Spanish people and there are a lot of my cousins out there. They fight fires; if somebody goes up there in a fourwheel, and just tears it up, they take them out of there. They just take care of it, and that's what I like. It can take care of itself, but not while people are there. It needs help.

#### Ethnic Involvement in ICO

Moore: Do you think that there's a need for more ethnic people to get involved in ICO?

Zuni: Oh, sure, all kinds. Here in Oakland there is a variety. We have black people, Spanish people, Indian, Chinese, Puerto Ricans, Filipinos. Everything. There hasn't been one trip where everyone was the same race. I think Mr. Paz tries to keep it where there's a little bit of everything, and he's done pretty good doing that, too.

Moore: You mentioned that in your first meeting with him he asked you if you were Indian. So what you're saying then is that he tries to go out of his way to see that it's a mixed group? He makes it a point?

Zuni: Yeah, I think he does make it a point. Even if I would have said, "I'm Spanish," I'm sure he would have still invited me. We were walking down the hall, and he asked this other guy. He came up to him and said, "Are you by any chance, Irish?" Because he had a big clover on his back. He said, "Oh, no, I'm Spanish." And Mr. Paz said, "No matter. Would you like to come on an ICO trip?" He said, "What's that?" He said, "Do you like to go backpacking?" The person said, "I've never done it." And he said, "Well, you're going to do it this time, right?" And he said, "Yeah." And that was it. He became one of the good backpackers.

Moore: What would you tell someone who wasn't familiar with the ICO Program to get them interested in it?

Zuni: I'd tell them about the mountains of the Sierra Nevada range that are close to the California-Nevada border. A lot of them really get interested, and I show them on the map. I don't know

Zuni: if that's where the Sierra Club got it's name, but I'm sure it is because John Muir was the founder, and he was really overwhelmed by the Sierras. I'd tell them in ICO we take out kids who've never before gone. You pay for the food and the gas, which we try to keep down very low. We supply backpacks, sleeping bags, down parkas and all we need is you. You need some Levis, some good walking shoes and your own personal stuff.

Then I tell them about our experiences: one group will do the dishes; one group will cook. This group will wake up for breakfast early, or if everybody feels like sleeping in we'll sleep in. If they're really interested I'll ask the leader for a permission slip, the parents will sign it. We'll get all the information we need and they'll go. Usually they'll go again.

Moore: Well, I'm really delighted to have met you. It sounds really good.

Zuni: Thank you.

Moore: You are welcome and thank you.

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Sierra Club Oral History Project

Helen King Burke

SIERRA CLUB OUTREACH TO WOMEN:  
WOMEN'S ISSUES IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

An Interview Conducted by  
Waverly Lowell

Sierra Club History Committee  
1980

Sierra Club Oral History Project

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Helen Burke  
Signature of Narrator

685 Glusa Ave.  
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Name and address of Narrator

Accepted for the Sierra  
Club by

9 May 1979  
Dated

Ann Lage  
Chairman, History Committee

Waverly Lowell  
Signature of Interviewer

5-25-79  
Dated

93 Henry St  
San Francisco, CA 94114

Name and address of Interviewer

May 9, 1979  
Dated

Sierra Club - Women's Outreach Task Force  
Subject of Interview(s)

## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Helen King Burke wears many hats in the Sierra Club, they include:

- member of the National Board of Directors
- fifth officer of the Sierra Club
- Board liaison to the Northern California Regional Conservation Committee
- liaison to the Women's Outreach Task Force
- liaison to the Urban Environment Task Force
- chair of the Long Range Financial Planning Sub-Committee of the Board of Directors
- member of the Publications Committee.

She was chosen for this project because of her involvement in the Women's Outreach Task Force.

Interviewer: Waverly B. Lowell, University of California, Berkeley

### Conduct of

the interview: This transcript is the result of a single interview held on May 9, 1979, at Mrs. Burke's home in Berkeley. The session was rescheduled due to an extension of the national board of directors' meeting, held in San Francisco from May 5-7, 1979. Mrs. Burke is currently active in the Sierra Club in a volunteer capacity. We talked for nearly an hour and were interrupted once by a phone call relating to a minor automobile accident. She seemed to have things on her mind and is generally a busy woman, however she supports the Oral History Project and was willing to do the interview. Mrs. Burke was well prepared for the interview having collected papers and letters relevant to the subject which she copied for inclusion with the interview. She also donated personal photographs.

### Editing:

The typed transcript was sent to Mrs. Burke with editing instructions and an index of proper names. It was received by the interviewer one week later with minor corrections in syntax, grammar and phrasing. She was contacted once more to clear up a couple of points in the interview and answer some biographical questions. She has expressed her appreciation of the interview and the work it entailed.

Waverly Lowell  
Interviewer  
May 31, 1979



WOMEN'S ISSUES IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

Personal Background/Early Activity in the Sierra Club

- Lowell: I'm speaking to Helen Burke of the Sierra Club's Women's Outreach Program. Where did you grow up, Helen?
- Burke: I grew up back east and lived most of my formative years in New England. My parents now live around Springfield, Massachusetts. I spent several years working and so forth in Boston before moving out here to the West Coast in 1971. I had served in the Sierra Club there, was elected to the New England Chapter Executive Committee and organized a conference for the Sierra Club, "What Professionals Can Do to Help Save the Environment." When I got married and moved out here--after working for ten years--I decided to do full-time volunteer work for the Sierra Club. I had met my husband in the Sierra Club in the Boston area. I should say that I'm thirty-eight. So roughly between the ages of twenty-one and thirty I worked as a secretary and administrative assistant and planning assistant and also was a conference organizer. And then when I came out here, as I said, I became a volunteer full time.
- Lowell: You worked as a conference organizer and planner for the Sierra Club?
- Burke: Well, I organized the conference for three months for the Sierra Club. That was the only conference I organized, it was a one shot deal.
- Lowell: How did you become interested in the Sierra Club?
- Burke: I became interested in the Sierra Club back when I lived out here briefly in the early sixties. I lived in San Francisco for a couple of years. At that time I became interested in the outings program of the Sierra Club and joined the club, at that time, for the outings program. Then I moved back east to the Boston area. I was anxious to become active in the Sierra Club there, but at

Burke: that time there was no local unit of the Sierra Club. It was all part of the Atlantic Chapter, and you had to be able to fly down to New York all the time to be active. I was interested and I contacted the person responsible for the Boston area and said, "Why don't we get something going?" He said he didn't think the interest was there and so forth. Then a couple of years later some other people came along, mostly graduate students and young lawyers and that sort of thing. They were interested in getting a New England Chapter going. So then I got active at that point. My first responsibility within the Sierra Club there was to be Outings Chair for the Chapter. I knew nothing about insurance liability and all that, but I had a lot of fun finding out.

At first there was no program at all, and I worked with other people to get a program. In two years' time we got a program whereby there were several activities every weekend. We tried to lend a conservation emphasis to the outings program by leading trips to conservation issue sites. We tried to link up, as much as possible, the outings arms of the club with the conservation mission of the club.

Lowell: What is your exact title now, the office that you hold in the Sierra Club?

Burke: I am a member of the national board of directors. This last weekend I was elected fifth officer, so I'm an officer of the club as well. Then I have a lot of other subtitles in those capacities but I don't know if you want me to list them.

Lowell: Sure, why don't you list them.

Burke: One is liaison to the Women's Outreach Program. Another is liaison to the Urban Environment Task Force. I'm chair of the Long Range Financial Planning Sub-Committee of the Board of Directors. I'm a member of the Publications Committee. I'm Board liaison to the Northern California Regional Conservation Committee. I think that's about it.

Lowell: I'm sure that keeps you pretty busy?

Burke: Yes.

#### History of the Women's Outreach Program

Lowell: Let's talk about the Women's Outreach Program. What exactly does your title of liaison mean?

Burke: It means that in essence, I'm the interface point between the volunteer sector and the board on that particular issue. Right now, I have been looking for someone in the volunteer sector to become chair of the Women's Outreach Task Force. In other words, someone, a woman Sierra Club member, who would be primarily responsible for heading up that activity. It would have to be her primary thrust. I have not yet located someone who wants to do that within the Sierra Club. All the other women Sierra Club members so far have other responsibilities within the club. So I'm still searching for that person.

Lowell: When did the Women's Outreach Program begin?

Burke: It began, I believe, it was two years ago last fall. The impetus for it came at the national level. What happened was that back in 1977 there was a Timber Supply Act Bill. The timber industry started hiring women to go out and lobby women and consumer groups for their version of the Timber Supply Act. Of course, the Sierra Club was interested in getting a selective cutting approach as opposed to a clearcutting approach. The timber industry, of course, is interested in as liberal a bill as possible in terms of permitting clearcutting.

They hired a woman, Dorothy Duke, who had been active with the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) to go around and lobby women's groups, to say, look, women and consumers, if you support the timber industry version of the bill the cost of housing will go down because wood will be more readily available. Brock Evans, the executive director of our Washington Office and sort of our main lobbyist in Washington, discovered this. Then he was asked by Dorothy Duke to find a Sierra Club spokesperson for a workshop sponsored by the National Council of Negro Women that was taking place in New Jersey. He asked Michelle Perrault, who was then New England Regional Conservation Committee Chair, to attend that workshop and represent the Sierra Club point of view. This was one in a series of workshops on natural resources sponsored by NCNW.

So Michelle went. That, coupled with the Equal Rights Amendment proceedings coming to a head, and the Sierra Club being asked if they supported the ERA, the whole thing kind of came together. Then also, I think that within the Sierra Club, if you look at past presidents, if you look at the percentage of women serving on the board and if you look at various other percentages within the club, the club has, in the past, been a rather male-dominated institution. I think that's changing now. We presently have four women on a board of fifteen, which is roughly a little over one-fourth. I have some statistics which I can find for you in terms of active women on the executive committees, etc. Those percentages are going up. But at any rate, I think that

Burke: the women's outreach effort has an aspect of being a kind of support group for women within the Sierra Club.

All of this came together, and a year ago in May of 1978 a motion came before the board to support the Equal Rights Amendment. This coincided with the National Population Committee coming to the board with a comprehensive population policy including a plank of support for the Equal Rights Amendment. The idea here was that one of the factors that exacerbates our environmental problems is over-population. The extent to which the Sierra Club and other environmental groups can support laws and other ways of giving women an alternative to child-bearing roles is all to the good. For the tape, why don't I read into the record the resolution that was passed:

The Sierra Club urges ratification and implementation of the Equal Rights Amendment as quickly as possible as a guarantee of a national commitment to equal status and participation for women and men in all facets of life. Such measures would foster increased career and educational opportunities for women, resulting in better utilization of women's skills in promotion of wise stewardship of the earth.

Now I think there was a motion back in November 1977 that basically supported the formation of the Task Force. I should say as way of background that the Women's Outreach Program fits in with a recent trend of the club to engage in coalition-building as a way of getting broader support for our legislation in Washington. In recent years we've seen the formation of the Labor Liaison Task Force of which Les Reid is chair on our board. We've seen the formation of the Urban Environment Task Force of which Bill Futrell is the chair. I think the Women's Outreach is in that same tradition of reaching out to other groups and developing areas of mutual concern so that we can have broader support in Washington for legislation that we're supporting.

#### Goals of Women's Outreach Task Force

Burke: I think that the goals of the Women's Outreach Program are really three-fold. First, one purpose is to build a coalition by maintaining general support of women's groups and by developing better working relations with them. A second purpose is to promote the club's conservation goals by generating support for national and local Sierra Club campaigns among women's groups on issues of mutual interest, such as toxic substances and cosmetics safety. The third goal is to attract women to the club as members and active volunteers. So there's kind of a three-fold purpose



Burke: to the Women's Outreach Program.

Sierra Club's Response to Women's Issues

Lowell: Now, these are the national goals?

Burke: Yes, they're the national goals--national goals and local goals as well. The Sierra Club is a bottoms-up and top-down organization. It's both; it's a two-way process within the Sierra Club. One of the problems is that right now the program is a line item in the budget receiving \$100 a year, which basically covers a few phone calls and mailings. We have made membership in the Women's Outreach Program a voluntary thing. I wrote an article for chapter newsletters telling people about the formation of the task force and the initiation of the program and asking people if they were interested to send their name and address in to Peggy Hynd who works over at our national headquarters. I asked people if they would be willing to contribute a donation of five dollars to cover mailing costs and so forth. We received, as of I think it was last fall, a hundred and thirty dollars to be used for that. Which is good. But I think in terms of any tremendous effort at the grass roots level, our level of funding just doesn't permit anything more than articles and keeping people up to date. We've made an effort to meet at every national board of directors meeting. We considered the ERA resolution a year ago, found out that one female board member did not support the ERA (laughs), but the board did pass support for the ERA.

The resolution that I read, I think it was thirteen yeses and one abstention. The female board member abstained. She didn't vote against it. We heard from club members at that meeting, and I may be anticipating one of your questions, that the Women's Outreach Program is not universally supported in the club. There are people within the club that do not support the Equal Rights Amendment. They seem to be mostly from southern and/or mid-western states. At our board meeting last May two or three people, one from Georgia and I can't remember, a couple of other southern states, did get up and say that they were opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment. Several people spoke rather heatedly, both pro and con. Some did not see the relationship between women's issues and environmental issues and felt that we were spreading ourselves too thin and opposed the whole effort.

That's another reason why I've not pushed tremendously within the club to move in this area because I think it's important in the Sierra Club to try to keep the support of the members as much as possible. If you move forward too vigorously with a controversial issue then it tends to weaken your effort.

Burke: So I have not pushed as hard as personally I might have wished to do for that reason. I've tried to keep it kind of a low key effort within the club. At least have a place where people, women who are interested in feminist issues and in moving this forward have a place for them to be active if they choose to do so.

At the local level I have been able to find at least two chapter coordinators. One in the Bay Chapter here, Mary Rodgers and a girl in Los Angeles, in the Los Angeles Chapter, Barbara Raichle. Then I've had correspondence. A lot of women have written to me saying that they would like to be active. And I've written back to them and thanked them for their interest and said I'm open to suggestions. Basically, as I've said, what I'd like to find is a woman who's willing to take the thing on, because I am spread too thin myself. I'd like to get some new blood.

Lowell: Take it on, on the national level?

Burke: On the national and local levels, both. I think there are two levels to the thing. I think at the national level if you got a woman who really wanted to run with the ball here, for example, you could have a national conference on women in the environment or women and environmental health, or the nuclear issue. I showed you this Feminist Anti-Nuclear Task Force that's been formed. I just received this in the mail yesterday. I'm very interested because I'm very concerned about that, too.

I think the Harrisburg, the Three Mile Island incident, really pointed up the fact that women, particularly pregnant women, are very prone to feeling the effects of any kind of nuclear accident. So I would be interested myself in seeing the club moving in this direction. We just had a luncheon the other day at our annual board meeting, a women's outreach luncheon, and met with the president of the club, Ted Snyder, who was just re-elected, to talk about future directions. Unfortunately time was really limited, and we didn't really get around to summing things up. I would like to see the club take this on as an issue and then have local chapters form anti-nuclear task forces and become involved at the local level with any rallies that might take place, or whatever people want to do. But again the nuclear issue within the club is controversial; there are some people within the club who don't support our position on nuclear. And, by the way, this weekend we just took a further action on our nuclear policy. We voted in support of gradual conversion of all nuclear plants to alternative forms of energy, not just new ones.

Burke: There is a very vocal minority among club members that doesn't support that position, although that situation may have been ameliorated with the Three Mile Island incident. So that at any rate, brings us up to speed there. That is one future of the Women's Outreach Program that I can see at this point.

Present Status of Women's Outreach Program

Lowell: How many local/regional task forces are there formed at this point?

Burke: I would say it's all kind of very loose and ad-hoc. As I say, there's nobody at the national level coordinating this other than myself, and it's on a very ad-hoc basis there. But I would say there are probably about three that I know of that are formed. To continue that ball really requires following through and all that, and I just have not been doing that to the greatest extent possible.

Lowell: You've gotten a lot of positive response though?

Burke: Yes, I mean I have, the only negative response I got was, let's see, there have been two kinds of negative response. One was at the meeting a year ago when we adopted support of the ERA. There were about two or three speakers who were very definitely opposed to that whole thing. The other kind of negative feedback has been in letters to the club president or to Michael McCloskey, the executive director, saying why is the Sierra Club involved in spreading itself too thin. Why is the club in ERA, why is the club in labor issues, why is the club in urban environment stuff? They can't see why the club is spread out into these areas. They say, what do those areas have to do with the environment?

Lowell: So one of your jobs is trying to explain to people that it's all integrated.

Burke: That's right.

Lowell: That you can't really separate labor from environment.

Burke: Like John Muir said, "Everything is hitched to everything else." That's right.

Lowell: So do you feel like that's one of your main thrusts, as well?

Burke: Yes, one of my main thrusts has been to talk to people, to write, when I address groups within the Sierra Club I explain it. In other words, as a sort of spokesperson for this effort within the club.

Lowell: Because you're also involved in urban environment, and you had talked some about labor; so that combines all those kinds of outreach programs.

### Coalition Building

Burke: That's right, that's right. I think right now if you talk to any of the people like Mike McCloskey, who I think has been executive director for over ten years now. You talk to Mike and Brock Evans, who is another one who has been with the club a long time, and both of them are clearly seen as spokespeople for the club. They will both tell you; they will readily agree to the need for this kind of coalition building. Because their eye is on the legislative scene in Washington. They realize only too well the need for this kind of thing. The other thing is that the club is the most effective broad-spectrum conservation group in the United States.

I think as such we are continually singled out by the enemies. Whether it be in the timber industry or the nuclear or energy field or public lands wilderness areas or whatever. We are continually singled out as the bete noire, the black hat or white hat, as the case may be. That speaks to our effectiveness. But one of the grounds for criticizing the club is that we're elitist, that we're all white. Where are the black faces in the club? That we want to lock up the wilderness for those who can get in there, the backpackers and so forth. That we are more interested in posies and birds than we are in people. I think that these coalition efforts are all human-directed, toward people per se. They help counter that image of the club as an elitist backpacking wilderness-only organization. In terms of public relations and so forth it's just been an invaluable effort within the club.

Lowell: What kind of response are you getting from outside the club, in terms of women's groups and other kind of groups that you are forming the coalition with?

Burke: The best description of that is this new coalition that's forming called Women for Environmental Health. That partially came about a year ago last February when I flew to Washington for our annual board of directors meeting. The Women's Outreach Program

- Burke: had just begun at that point; it was set up the previous November. So I made an effort to talk to women's groups.
- Lowell: Which groups? What kinds of groups?
- Burke: Okay, I'll describe. What I wanted to do was talk to women in labor, women in just plain feminist organizations, women in other environmental groups, women in government, to talk about if there was a possibility of forming a coalition that would cover at the national level environmental issues that particularly affected women, to see if there was an area of mutual concern there. So I started calling people up. I knew some Sierra Club women had been hired by the U.S. government, you know, when Carter came in as president. So I contacted some of them.
- Lowell: Can you give us some of their names?
- Burke: Yes, Juanita Wint is one. Kathy Fletcher and Barbara Blum are two more. I'm trying to think who else.
- Lowell: These were women who were with the Sierra Club?
- Burke: Juanita Wint was with the Sierra Club. Kathy Fletcher was an active environmentalist not with the Sierra Club but outside. Barbara Blum had been active in the club in Georgia. So I called them. I called Environmental Defense Fund in Washington because they've been known for their work with toxics and pesticide residue in mothers milk and triss material--different issues that specifically affect women and have to do with chemicals or poisons in the environment. So I contacted them. Then there's the Urban Environment Conference, and they are very interested in issues in which urban and environmental issues overlap. Then I talked to women in labor organizations, the coal workers. Then there's this gal named Ellen Hall, I've forgotten the name of the group she's with, but again that had a labor orientation. I contacted Charlene Dougherty, and Marcia Fine at Environmental Defense Fund.

Then I talked to the League of Women Voters; they were just hiring somebody in toxics in their national office. I guess that kind of gives you an idea of who I talked to. Oh, and then I also talked to two women at the Environmental Protection Agency, because they're forming their own women's outreach. They were compiling a directory of women in environmental issues across the country. They were interested in working with the Sierra Club, anything we wanted to do. I talked to Pam Deuel at Environmental Action. I tried to contact Louise Dunlap in the Environmental Policy Center in Washington but never did get through to her. I tried to get a hold of

Burke: Eula Bingham, a high level official with OSHA. And I contacted the president of National Women's Political Caucus. I tried to get through to NOW, the vice president there, but they were all tied up in strategy on ERA and I never could get through.

At any rate, I made appointments with all these people. I went to see them and everybody was super enthusiastic. They said, "Great, let's do something," like form a coalition of groups. I had arranged to have a breakfast of the Sierra Club Women's Outreach Task Force before the national board meeting, and I said, "Well, look, why don't you come to that?" So then what turned out was that all these women from government and labor and feminist groups all came to this breakfast. They were super enthusiastic. The woman at Environmental Defense Fund, Marcia Fine, carried the ball. After that meeting, they set up a steering committee to look into this. Now they've formed this group called Women for Environmental Health. I went back this year, and they had six or seven people on their steering committee. And they are beginning to get going. I noticed that they are sponsoring this Feminist Anti-Nuclear Task Force so they've obviously taken that on as an issue.

They are going to be having a membership drive. I just joined when I was there in February. So at any rate I think that's one of the by-products that came out of the thing. Which is very good.

Lowell: If you found someone to be coordinator of the Women's Outreach Task Force, they would then be part of that coalition?

Burke: Yes. What I would see is that they would work with them on this Feminist Anti-Nuclear Task Force.

Lowell: What local groups did you contact?

Burke: I got a couple of names. Stephanie Harris is on the Environmental Defense Fund Staff in Berkeley. She was going to be here for a year working for Environmental Defense Fund in Berkeley. So I contacted her. I also contacted a woman who is with sort of a labor environmental health group. She had written a book on women's environmental health issues. She was particularly interested in environmental health issues as they related to the labor movement. I had lunch with them, and I talked about it. I said, "Gee, what about getting something like this going in California?" Basically, they were just overburdened with other things they were doing. I had so many other things that I just didn't follow up on it. But I think that if there was enough energy--you know, people who would be committed to that one thing--something like that could be formed in California.

- Lowell: You mentioned something about the cosmetics industry before.
- Burke: A woman from Environmental Health was looking into the possible regulation of the cosmetics industry. Presently they are not required to print the ingredients of a cosmetic on the container; for example, what goes into lipstick, or cold cream, or whatever the product happens to be. One idea would be to have legislation that would require them to print the ingredients. It was just one issue that was talked about at our original meeting as an area we might want to pursue.
- Lowell: Have you decided to pursue it? What is happening with that?
- Burke: I really don't know what's happening. I think that some other things have come along, such as this nuclear issue and are going to preempt other issues such as that.

Club Stands on Abortion and the ERA

- Lowell: Has the Sierra Club any stand on something as controversial as, say, abortion?
- Burke: Yes. I believe about three or four years ago as part of our population policy the Sierra Club did support federal funding for abortions. Now I think as you probably know, the pendulum is swinging on the abortion issue. I believe it's swinging to the right. I don't know now, if the whole abortion question were brought up with the Sierra Club, how people would feel. There may be a more conservative view of abortion now, and maybe a more conservative stance would be adopted, I don't know.
- Lowell: What would you say is the status of the Women's Outreach Program at this point?
- Burke: Last year we kind of spent on ERA issues, Equal Rights Amendments issues. I think right now the program is in a point of transition. I think we need new people in the leadership. We're looking for a new direction. My own feeling is that this anti-nuclear area will be a good one to move in. I think it is an established program at this point and as part of our coalition-building effort.
- Lowell: So you feel that the Women's Outreach Task Force is most effective as a single issue sort of thing. Like from ERA to the nuclear with some feelers out toward the other things going on.
- Burke: Yes, I think that's a good description of it. I think that since we have only \$100 allocated in our annual budget, which

Burke: means it's very low down on our priority list, we have to match up our resources realistically. If we try to accomplish too much, then you disappoint people and don't meet expectations. I think it's better to focus your energies in one place where you think you can have an impact.

Lowell: How do you feel about your budget allocation?

Burke: I think that given the fact that not all the women in the Sierra Club would support this (Women's Outreach Task Force) much less the men, and also the fact that I think our members in general support more directly environmentally identified areas, that it's probably a realistic status for the budget at this time.

Lowell: Do you have men active in the Women's Outreach Task Force?

Burke: Yes, a lot of men support the task force--I lobbied all the board members before having this ERA thing come up and talked to them. They all basically supported the effort. Men have been to our Outreach Task Force meetings. I've made a point to open it to anybody who's interested, and several men have come and participated. I've been generally very impressed with the cooperative spirit. I feel that it should be a joint thing as much as possible. The primary thing is for women, but if men are interested and want to support that effort, I'm definitely pleased to have their support.

#### Benefits and Effects of Women's Outreach Program

Lowell: What kind of benefits do you think that the Outreach Task Force can offer to the Sierra Club, to women in general, to the environment?

Burke: To women in general, it can act as kind of a support group, as I mentioned earlier, for women in the Sierra Club. Secondly, I think that it ameliorates the Club's image of being an elitist, lock up the wilderness type of thing. I think it shows that the Sierra Club is concerned with people, is aware of various problems and so forth. Thirdly, I think it can help build us allies in issues. And I think the anti-nuclear is a perfect example of that. The ERA effort of the club is another example of that. So I think that there are three-way benefits to be gained here.

Lowell: Do you think that, to date, the Outreach Program has been effective?



- Burke: Generally, I think that it's still kind of getting off the ground. I think there's a lot of potential there that has not been realized, and I think it's a beginning. I would like to see it go forward.
- Lowell: In order to realize the potential, what do you need to do?
- Burke: You really need somebody, a volunteer within the club who is willing to take that on as their primary obligation and responsibility, who will follow through and work with the local regions and try to act as a sort of national coordinator on the issue. Until we get that, we're just going to continue to have kind of a low key generalized effort that we've had in the past.
- Lowell: How have you personally benefited from working with the Women's Outreach Task Force?
- Burke: I think it has expanded my horizons personally in terms of seeing what other organizations are into and just becoming more sensitive to or aware of women's issues. It just makes you more aware of the fact that for the club to be effective you need to broaden your perspective. I think personal growth is connected with moving in new directions. Just in a personal sense, it has forced me to grow in certain areas, and I think that's always healthy as far as I'm concerned.

#### Women in the Sierra Club

- Lowell: Is there anything else you want to say about the Women's Outreach Program or women in the Sierra Club in general?
- Burke: In general, women are becoming more active in the Sierra Club, particularly at leadership levels. I think that we need to encourage that. One thing that concerned me was the other night at our annual dinner when they gave out annual awards. They had all the living club presidents all grouped and lined up there. Of course, they were all male. I think most of the awards within the club go to men and are presented by men. Several women at the board meeting the next day commented on that to me and said, "How come there are not more women at least giving awards?" I had spoken to the club president about that but, you know, these things take time.

I think that's one visible area in which we could try to have more participation by women. So I think that these things all take time. Things are changing and moving in a good direction, and it's just going to be a matter of time to see the results.

- Lowell: What is the percentage of women in the Sierra Club to men?
- Burke: I think in terms of membership it's around slightly fewer women. Judy Kunofsky, our national population coordinator for the Sierra Club--by the way, Judy is the one who brought this whole thing to me in the beginning and she has been a great sort of catalyst in this whole area--did a little quick survey of numbers of women who served on chapter executive committees. I think the number was somewhere around forty percent. Thirty-eight to forty percent of executive committee members were women. Then she did an analysis of staff. One complaint has been that there's not enough women in top staff positions. I think that's true, although there are more women managers now within the club. I think the club is improving in that area.
- Lowell: Are those staff positions paid positions?
- Burke: Yes.
- Lowell: It sounds like you have an equal proportion of women to men in volunteer positions but that the paid positions are primarily men?
- Burke: I think that in leadership roles there are fewer women than men. But it's roughly forty percent overall. It's also interesting to note that, for example, if you look at membership chairs and public relations and that sort of thing, there's a higher percentage, I think something like sixty percent, women in those positions. Which sort of fits in with the traditional image of women's role, of the woman being the one doing the social aspects of things. But I think as far as the Regional Conservation Chairs, the regional vice presidents are concerned, right now I believe there are three out of a total of ten, roughly one-third are in leadership positions. Then, as I said, there are four women out of fifteen on the national board of directors. Then if you look at the officers, one woman out of five, one fifth is a woman. So I think that the volunteer structure and the staff situation more or less reflect one another. As I said, I think those trends are changing.
- Lowell: Why do you think they're changing?
- Burke: When I was first active in the club, I think all regional vice presidents in the club were men. There were all men on the board. I've been active for ten years or so. So I think that gradually things are changing but there's still a ways to go on this.
- Lowell: It sounds like you're getting a pretty good support from within the club.

Burke: Yes, the men, for example, on the board I think realize the need to move in this direction. When I was lobbying them on the ERA I wasn't at all sure how they were going to view that. But I was surprised that they did support it and did see the need for it. In all candor I think to some extent they felt awkward about openly opposing it. There's an element of that, too. But, in fact, they did support it. So I think times they are a'changin'. I think there's a recognition of the women's movement as a potent political force in American life. And I think the board members perceive that and want to flow with that trend and not buck it, basically.

Lowell: Great. So do you think that we've covered pretty much everything?

Burke: Yes. I think we've pretty much said what there is to say.

Lowell: Any wrap-up words on the Task Force, things you'd like to do in the future, or other kinds of issues?

Burke: I would like to see more women elected to the board. I've been encouraging women to run, where I can.

Lowell: What effect do you think more women on the board would have?

Burke: Basically, I think, again, it would further sensitize the men on the board to issues of particular interest to women. I think there is a traditionally male orientation in the Sierra Club. That men are really the only ones who can carry responsibility and so forth. The more men see capable women, qualified women elected to the board, the more they will see that women are able to carry significant burdens, etc. That's what women's liberation is all about. So I think from that standpoint it's good. I just see a gradual education process on the board and I think the board reflects the club's membership as a whole. They're a visible unit within the club. People do pay attention to what the board does. They're kind of a symbol.

The executive director, Mike McCloskey, set up an ombudsman function because a couple of women on the staff complained to me that at the very top levels there are no women. And that's true. Although the managers, the department heads, there are more women department heads. So the executive director set up this ombudsman, sort of a women's outreach ombudsman within the staff. (The ombudsmen are) Judy Kunofsky and Fran Gendlin. Judy's the national population coordinator, Fran Gendlin's the editor of the Bulletin. I also should say that Fran has been supportive of this whole women's outreach effort. She's held women's outreach breakfasts at her apartment in

- Burke: San Francisco and has provided rolls and coffee and that sort of thing, which has been very nice. She's given some coverage of the issues in the Bulletin, so that's another dimension that's good. I can think of only one regional representative that's a woman. That's MargAnn Erikson from southern California. All the rest of them are men. As I said, there are still things to be attended to and the more you have women on the board that are sensitive to these problems, the more headway you can make in trying to smooth things out. I think I've about talked myself out here.
- Lowell: Thanks a lot.
- Burke: One other dimension of the Women's Outreach Program has been the preparation of a book called Women in Wilderness. That's going to be coming out very soon in the Sierra Club's publications program, Sierra Club Books Program. I think it's another way that will highlight the Sierra Club's concern or awareness of the role of women in the environmental movement.
- Lowell: Where will you be able to buy that?
- Burke: It should be available at any large bookstore. Sierra Club books are distributed widely. It should be coming out, I believe in the fall. It's something people can look for.

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