

Adam Ostola's Interview
with
Bob Marietti

Me: When and where were you born?

Bob: I was born right here in Ishpeming on Nov. 22, 1933, nice easy number to remember, 11/22/33

Me: What were your parents names?

Bob: My mothers name was Ruth, and my fathers name was John Sr.

Me: What are the names of your brothers and sisters?

Bob: My goodness. There were four older siblings, John, the oldest, then Gerald, Paul, then Marie, and then I came along, ~~and~~ there was following me Raymond, Richard, Alice, Ruth Gene, Dorothy, Edith, Margaret, Judith, Florence, William (Bud), and then of course our charmed David. I think that's the whole shooting match.

Me: How many kids were there in all?

Bob: Well, it was a tie game when it was all finished because there were eight boys and eight girls.

Me: Were you married?

Bob: Yes, I married former Karen Brown, and lived right here in the West Ishpeming Location, grew up here. I met her after my military service was completed and everything.

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Me: Where did you marry her?

Bob: We were married right here in Ishpeming at the old St. Joseph Church on Johnson and Lake Street.

Me: What did your parents do for a living?

Bob: My mother of course was a full-time housewife and a warden for the group, and my father spent forty-five years with the mining company.

Me: Where did you go to school?

Bob: I went, my elementary years were at St. John's here in Ishpeming, and then I went two years at the Ishpeming High School, and my final two years I spent at St. Paul's in Negaunee.

Me: What special memories do you have of growing up in this area?

Bob: Well, there were all kinds of memories because of the large family, there was always activity, and I guess the one thing that sticks in my mind was having grown up in the midst of all this turmoil, and one evening, sitting out on the front porch when all of the other brothers and sisters had found something to do, and I was very young at the time, I was probably around seven or eight of us at home, but all my older brothers and sisters had gone somewhere, and I found myself alone on the porch and I started to cry. I just had never been used to the fact of being alone.

Me: What things stand out in your mind about the cities of Ishpeming and Negaunee? Have they changed?

Bob: Oh, yes, of course. So many things have changed. I came in right at the tail end but I can still remember the butcher shops with the sawdust on the floor, and of course the [unclear] was running all the way up until my high school years so a lot of those things have changed dramatically and of course the town continues to change, and that's good.

Me: What did you and your friends do for entertainment?

Bob: Well, we didn't have the cars to buzz the gut, but we did that on foot. There were a lot of good times and it was good to gather ya know, and of course Auntie's, the present Shelb's across from the Mather Inn was the gathering place for all the youngsters. That's where all the high school people went.

Me: Do you have any interesting or humorous stories to tell, about high school?

Bob: I was born the runt of the litter and so I was very small when I got into high school and one of my classmates was even smaller yet, and I was 5' 1" and 96 pounds and Paul Coron was even less than that and, I can remember playing football on the JV's with Coach Watson, was the coach and he had some rather large people compared with us. Jack Boase was one of those and he played fullback, and I can remember Coach Watson putting both Paul Coron and I in as linebackers in a practice and the whole would open up and a fellow like Jack Boase would run right over

Bob: The top of us. I think I still have the cleve marks on my chest to prove it.

Me: How old were you when you found your first job?

Bob: My first regular job, I was 17 years old, it was an assembly line type job and I only held it about four months, because I don't think I was built for the repetitious kind of work that you find on assembly lines.

Me: How many total years did you work in your lifetime?

Bob: Well, I started when I was 17 and there weren't many breaks in there so, the one year I took off to earn my Master's degree was one of the few years ~~it~~ it happened, and it was the most educational year of my life. I was 35 years old I think at the time, and it was in '69 or '70 and I received a Mott Leadership grant or stipend for \$5,000, but to accept that we had to move to Flint and it was a year of internships where I would take and work six to eight weeks under the direction of either a Community School Director or ~~other~~ type of supervisor, and I worked in the various schools in Flint, for six or eight weeks at a time, and in the first semester of the year, and in the second semester of the year I had the enjoyment of flying out to New Mexico and serving eight weeks in an internship building a Community School program into ^{New Mexico which is on the Navajo Indian} Reservation. Following that internship I was asked if I would go to Kingman, Arizona to work in the Mohave School District which is the largest geographical school district in the contiguous United States, and I did that for six weeks, and in that internship my family flew out from Flint and joined me, so that was really nice.

Me: Where were you employed the longest?

Bob: In my present job, the job that I just retired from, in fact at the end of January '93 I finished my tour of duty with Community Schools and I was in my 23rd year with them. In fact, when I joined the Community Schools there was merely two school districts, the NICE school district had not yet formed, so there was only the Ishpeming and Negaunee Community schools at that time.

Me: Why did you choose this career?

Bob: Really, by happened stance. My undergraduate work was in physical education, and my major is in physical education and when I got to my final year of schooling a good friend of mine who I reached under at St. Paul's, Alan De Harra, was working at the state department of education, and convinced me that I should switch my career direction, and go into community education, so I was in my final year at Northern when I actually switched careers.

Me: What was the most rewarding part of your job?

Bob: Working with the community, and finding out just what a great community it is.

Me: What was the most challenging or difficult part of your job?

Bob: Well, there were a lot of difficult phases, I would say working in the literacy program, and working with adults. Adults that are returning to school, most of them having failed in their educational endeavors in previous tries and then having to convince them that they were capable, that they did have potential, and that they could do the job. That's the most challenging. That's probably the most challenging thing in life.

Me: How did these duties change over the years?

Bob: Well, the only thing I saw changing were more rules and regulations coming from state departments and things of this nature, becoming more bound up in paperwork and not being able to actually do your job. Not to the extent you'd like to do it, it's really a people's job, and the more paperwork you have generated, the less time you have.

Me: Were there any humorous or interesting events that happened, during this career?

Bob: Oh gracious me, yes. In fact it would be difficult for me to single out any certain one, but, besides being a demanding job, in the fact that you have to motivate people who have failed before, it was also a fun job, because you were also dealing with adults who had also built a good sense of humor, generally. They knew how to laugh at life even in tough times, and so yes, there were a lot of fun times.

Me: Did you ever feel like changing careers?

Bob: No, I really enjoyed the 22+ years that I worked for community education. I would not have hesitated to continue on, except that there are personal things that people like to do in life too, and one of those I am going to satisfy shortly, and that's to take our long bike trip across the country, Dave and I.

Me: What are some of your favorite leisure activities and hobbies?

Bob: Biking has really become one of the big things, just the joy of being out on the open road and meeting new people, and finding out how great people are, not only in our community, but across the country.

Me: Do you have any special stories to tell about that?

Bob: David gives us all kinds of stories, and, David by the way, is a great teacher, David has taught us a lot, as we've spent the last 15 years or so with him, he's taught us patience and tolerance, he's taught us how to laugh at ourselves, and he taught us, I guess, the most of all, is that you can't put limits on people. We always thought that David was limited in a lot of areas and we're finding out that that is just not so.

Me: What specific clubs and organizations have ~~you~~ been involved in?

Bob: I am not a joiner, per say, but I am, thanks to the membership, a life member of the Amvets organization, and a past commander of that organization, and it is a fine organization. I have been past president of the Ishpeming diplomats which is the welcoming arm of the Chamber of Commerce. I was a past president of the Chamber of Commerce. I was a Big Brother in the Big Brother Organization. I had two young men that I was responsible for. One moved away and unfortunately ended in a tragedy and another one who is now a military policeman in the army.

Me: And the other?

Bob: The other young man I never did reach to any extent while he was here although the time was not long, but he ended up taking his own life. He was not living here at the time, he moved into another state.

Me: Are you a member of the Ski Hall of Fame?

Bob: No, I am not. We contribute to the Ski Hall of Fame but I am not an active member, per say. In fact, that's ~~one~~ of the reasons for utilizing this trip as a fundraiser. I had been asked to become active in the organization and felt I didn't have the time to do justice for it. And now, being in retirement and taking this biketrip it seemed like a good vehicle to raise funds for the ski hall.

Me: How old were you when you joined your first club?

Bob: I guess the first formal organization was the Amvets, and I became interested in them, through the fact that we utilize the Amvet property for our outdoor camp when I became a community school director, and I directed the camp for a number of years and became acquainted with their members, and the good that the organization did, and decided to join, and that was, I think in 1972.

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Me: And you enjoyed that?

Bob: Yes, it was very enjoyable, like every experience you have over a period of time there are times that are a little trying. As a commander I was called to task at one point for putting in a tree cutting, that was not met pleasantly by all the members. It did turn out very well, however, in the end.

Me: How many total years were you involved with them?

Bob: Well I am still a member of the Amvets, I still do little things for them, I am not as active as I was. Again, there are some other things that have taken over.

Me: Where do you hold your activities or meetings?

Bob: In the summertime they hold them at the post home at the Amvet property, what is now Lake Unky. In the wintertime, I think they still hold them at the VFW clubroom.

Me: Were you recognized in any way for your involvement and performance with any of the organizations?

Bob: The Amvets honored me with a life membership for my work with that organization. I have been, in fact both my wife and I have been honored by the Special Olympics, we received the Glenn Brown Award which is given annually to the party that they feel has contributed the most to the Special Olympics, on a volunteer basis. I have received the past president's award from the Chamber of Commerce, as well as from the Diplomats. Just this past January I received the president's award from the outgoing president of the Chamber of Commerce for volunteer work with the chamber. It's difficult, again I don't look back at all these things, if I can add something it would be some of the work that was done in relation to the school district and the community, and one of the big projects that I was involved in was the renovation of the Ishpeming High School Auditorium now called the W.C. Peterson Auditorium. That began in '88 and, in fact, I am still responsible for the supervision of the auditorium. That was a real challenging, and a real rewarding project. There were projects there that just made you bust your buttons, because of the way people came to the fore

Bob: and volunteered their services and made the projects become reality, not only individuals but groups like the Pioneer Kiwanis Club who carried the major responsibility for the stage extension that was completed a year ago. Just amazing what they would do, and I guess that's just a reflection of the community. That and ^{also} starting up the first tutor volunteer group for the literacy program in the adult area. There were always between twenty and twenty-five ~~volunteered~~ tutors that would serve our students and that was the most rewarding thing because there you're talking of the direct effect on people.

Me: If you had to do this again, would you choose this same career?

Bob: Most definitely. Most definitely. I will probably go back and become involved again in the literacy area on a volunteer basis. I myself would like to become a tutor. It's probably one of the most fulfilling things, fulfilling ~~work~~ that you could play, I think, in this life, ~~to give~~ to give talents that you have to someone else.

Me: In closing, do you have anything else that you would like to add?

Bob: Well, do I get three seconds to think about that?

Me: As long as you want.

Bob: I just think that we're blessed, not only ^{to be} in the community that we're in, where we still feel fairly secure, and we have a good quality of life. But also in the country that we live in, and this is one of the reasons for the bike ride. We want to see up close and personal what this country looks like, who the people are, and get a chance to ~~interact~~ interact with them.

Me: Where exactly are you going?

Bob: We are going to start in Sacramento, and we go down to the Los Angeles - San Diego area, then we go across the southern states, across Texas, and down into New Orleans, then back up to Atlanta, Georgia. It's a trip of over 3,000 miles.

Me: When are you leaving?

Bob: We're flying out of here on the 18th of March and we leave on the 26th of March from Sacramento

Me: How long is the trip?

Bob: It should take us between 7 and 8 weeks, and if it takes longer, I guess that's all right, too. We have plenty of time, and we want to enjoy it, but we do have a projected time table, and that's what we think it will take us.

Me: Where have you gone on rides in the past?

Bob: Dave and I have made two extended trips. One to Detroit, I think it was three years ago, and one this past June, down to Dubuque, Iowa.

Me: How long did those trips take?

Bob: The trips took about five days; well they did take five days.
This is Adam Ostola, signing off...

Me: Thank you for your time.

Bob: Thank you.