

Recollections

by Bob Saindon

As I recall, I was the first executive secretary of the Foundation, having been elected by the Board in 1986. Dr. E. G. “Frenchy” Chuinard, second president of the Foundation, had argued for a long time for an executive secretary (“executary,” as he put it at one board meeting). He argued that all reputable foundations have such a position, and if we were to “proceed on” we needed to create an executive secretary position for our Foundation. Dr. Chuinard gave the Foundation’s magazine the name *We Proceeded On*, because it was so often used in the journals in regard to advancements by the Expedition. He also liked to use it with regard to any acts that advanced the Foundation forward.

Bob Lange had been in charge of all Foundation publication work for many years. He and Ruth were anxious for somebody to take over the magazine in order to free up some time for themselves. In a manner that was customary of the wise men who were running the Foundation at that time, the rumor was leaked to me that I was going to be asked if I would take over as editor of the magazine — thus, giving me some time to consider the proposition before the question was asked. I was reticent until the question was asked, and at that time (1987) I agreed, and took over the “editorship” of *WPO*. The job was far more than that of editor. I edited the articles that were submitted, having to rewrite some. I seldom had enough feature articles for a decent publication, and was therefore compelled to write an article or two for each issue. I also did the design, layout, and typesetting. I was paid, and received reimbursement for expenses, but I don't recall the amount, how, or when I was paid. I do not recall that I had any expense account for *WPO* or any “slush fund.” I would simply send in vouchers, and the treasurer took care of the bills. Bob Lange continued with the layout and printing of stationery, business cards, etc., as well as with supplemental publications.

Bob Lange had been using a Magnavox word processor to prepare copy for the printer. By today’s standards it was a rather archaic machine, although it did have the ability to retain some data on a disk. When I went to Portland to visit with Bob regarding the takeover of *WPO*, he took me down to an electronics store and we bought the same word processor for me that he was using. I must say, its capabilities for the kind of editing that I was about to embark upon were very limited.

After I accepted the challenge to take over *WPO* at the annual meeting in Portland in 1987, Foundation member Bob Betts came up to me at the social gathering before the awards banquet and thanked me for taking over the publication, and told me that he would buy anything I needed for *WPO* — big or small.

Prior to the meeting in Portland, Betts had been diagnosed for prostate cancer. I knew this, and by the time I was ready to accept his offer, he was going through treatment. It was therefore difficult for me to make the contact. When I did, I found out that he just didn't have the strength to bother with such matters. He simply told me to go ahead, buy what I needed and he would pay for it. He was unable physically or mentally to do any more than that, and he told me so.

I realize there was a story circulating shortly thereafter that a certain person contacted Betts and persuaded him to buy equipment for *WPO*, and even though he was very sick, he agreed to it. That was not the case. In all fairness to Betts, I must say that he made the offer to outfit *WPO* totally on his own. Betts and I had been pretty good friends at Foundation meetings and had corresponded a few times. A couple of times at meetings he pulled me aside and we would go off alone, have a drink and talk. He liked the Foundation, he liked *WPO*, and I believe he and I were friends. Those, I believe, were the reasons why he offered and eventually outfitted the Foundation with proper equipment to publish *WPO*. He bought for the Foundation a Mac computer with PageMaker software and a printer. It was the interest, and generosity of Bob Betts that brought the Foundation into the computer age.

After I began work on *WPO*, there were a couple of times when the Foundation's gracious member and benefactor, William P. Sherman, sent a check (made out to me personally) to buy things I needed for the production of the magazine. That, along with his encouragement and gracious comments contributed significantly to any progress that may have made while I was editor of *WPO*.

When the Lewis and Clark Commission was formed in 1964, one of the outcomes was that they had the Trail marked along highways--that is, markers as close to the Trail as a highway would allow.

The Ding Darling Foundation hired an artist by the name of "Bob" Davenport who did a painting of Lewis and Clark pointing the way. A silhouette detail of that painting was used on the road markers. I believe that it was during my presidency that the Foundation was given that painting. It may be that it was given earlier and held by Foundation treasurer Clarence Decker. When Decker was murdered, Bill Sherman flew down to East Alton, IL, and took possession of all Foundation property that was in Decker's possession. Among the things he brought back was the Davenport painting. It now hangs in the Bill Sherman Library at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Great Falls.

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