Bos, Deb Oral History Interview: Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

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Oral History Interview with
Deb Bos

Conducted July 24, 1997
by Ann Paeth

Sesquicentennial Oral History Project
"150 Stories for 150 Years"
Sesquicentennial Oral History Project
Interview with Deb Bos
July 24, 1997
Interviewer: Ann Paeth

AP: The first thing I have everybody do is state their name and where and when they were born.

DB: I'm Deb Bos. I was born [date removed], 1958 in Grand Rapids. I lived the first 18 years of my life in Hudsonville, Michigan. When I was 18 I moved to Holland. When I was 25 I got married, and when I was 31 we moved here to Overisel, east of Holland, south of Zeeland.

AP: Do you want to start with what has changed with Holland?

DB: Yes. When I was a child, I can remember going to shop in Holland, there was a particular store, it was called DuMez. That was similar to a Roger's Department store in Grand Rapids. It was two stories. Now it's either the Outpost or Locher Rutger's, I don't remember now. But that's where the store was located. So the things I really miss about Holland is having stores where you knew what was in it, and you walked in, made your purchase and you didn't have to worry about where else to shop. I think right now Holland is inundated with stores. It's not as much fun. The experience of it... As a kid, I remember that was such a big thing, to think, we're going to go to downtown, and we're going to find a new bathing suit, or whatever. That part of it, that was a huge change recently.

AP: It seems kind of impersonal.

DB: It does.
AP: Especially the help, or the lack of help, the salespeople give now.

DB: (laughs) Right. That especially. I think some of these people were employed for their whole life, worked there, and when you walked in, they may know you by name. Thinking back to my dad, too, I know he always shopped at a place called Mr. Guy. That was an annual event. I have three older brothers, and when they needed a new suit, they would go down to Holland and buy that at Mr. Guy, and knew the owner personally--I think Dick DenUyl might have owned that. Then, later on, Mr. DenUyl became quite well known for the restaurants that he owns in the Holland area. That goes back quite a ways. The other changes that I saw, after I moved to Holland, I guess I was probably about 20, the very first racquetball club opened up. At the time, the only other place to play racquetball was in Hope College in the DeWitt Center. So, I'm guessing that's probably 1979, it was the big thing, like when something becomes so popular and everyone wants to do it. I don't know what it would equate to, maybe Beanie Babies. I think there were over 5,000 members at that club at the time. Being a young person and having just moved to Holland, it was a real blessing for me to feel not so much like an outsider. I was working at that club and became familiar with a lot of people in Holland, and really enjoyed that. At the time, it was called Racquet Ball Plus. It's right by Big Lots on 8th Street by US 31. That was really a fun thing. The other change was when I started working with the Brooks Beverage Company, when they had just purchased the brand Squirt, and moved it from California to Holland. I was their first employee. I worked there for eight years, and enjoyed that a lot, too. I got to know
some of the people, but I think the nice thing about working for that company was the owner, Jim Brooks, Sr. I just heard he had a stroke a few weeks ago, so I know he’s not doing well physically. But he had a real rapport with all of these employees. I think you can probably pick that up from some of the employees around here, why it’s a good place to work, it’s because the ownership has a real respect for the employee. That was what was great about working for Squirt, and the company, was Mr. Brooks. Then, at the time, we’d always have our company picnics at Leisure Acres, which is now no longer in existence just this past year. So that will be gone now, too. Also what changed was Point West was demolished. That is where my husband and I had our wedding reception. As a child, too, annually or biannually, my dad would say, we’re going to Point West, and we’d all have to get dressed up. The thing I remember about Point West as a kid was I don’t think they had regular dessert, like a scoop of ice cream, but it was the first time we ever had cream de menthe parfait. It was very different to me. The waitresses walked around with large metal containers and asked if you wanted a roll, because these containers kept them all very warm. They’d walk around and serve them out to you. So these things I remember about Holland, those places, especially Ottawa Beach. I guess that’s probably what I remember the most. When I was 16, my first job was in Holland. It was at an ice cream stand on the corner of Lakewood and 120th, I believe. Now it’s a small Mexican restaurant there. But at the time it was first built, it was an ice cream stand there. My husband, he grew up in Holland, he lived there all his life on the north side of Holland. His grandfather owned the A&W Root Beer stand on
Butternut Drive. I think right now it's the old fire station on the corner of Vanderveen and Butternut. That fire station is closed down, but that is where it was located. So he remembers going to get root beer floats, and his mother worked there. As far as the north side of Holland, my husband is very familiar with it. At the time, it was quite rural yet. Now when you go out Butternut Drive, it's very congested. The West Ottawa School System is just huge now, and, of course, the malls are out that way. But he attended the Christian School System. I did too, in the Hudsonville area. I guess that's kind of it about how I remember Holland.

AP: So do we want to move into this other stuff? You mentioned you wanted to talk about your father and the things he was involved in. What did he do?

DB: When he first became involved with things in the Holland area, and I don't know what year it exactly was, but he and his step-father and one other gentleman began a radio station called WJBL. Right now, that station is called WJQ, which is a contemporary Christian music station. Back then on WJBL, it was, I believe, the first Christian music station in the Holland area. The reason they got involved with it is my step grandfather was from the Chicago area and knew a lot of people in the "Back to God Hour," and was very involved with broadcasting and things, and believed that he should start up a radio station that could broadcast the Christian message.

AP: Could I just interrupt for a second? I'm just realizing, I'm not sure if we got your maiden name and then your dad's name.

DB: OK. That's right. My maiden name is Grysen, and my dad is Jerome C. Grysen,
but everybody called him Doc. In 1961, (I was three years old) he was elected mayor of Hudsonville. He was mayor of Hudsonville for ten years until 1971. As far as the history of my dad, it would involve quite a bit of Hudsonville, too. But I believe because he was mayor of Hudsonville, he became very active in the Ottawa County Republican Party. The events that my dad participated in were fund raising events, campaigns for people. Thinking back to the people that I can recall that he would have assisted with were probably Bob Griffin, who was a United States senator at the time. Especially, I believe he was campaign manager for the congressman from the district, Guy VanderJagt. At the time, they would have special functions in the Grand Haven area, called Mulligan’s Hollow, and they would have functions called "Fry for Guy." You would go to these, and pay to attend, of course, and it would pay for the campaign for election. I can remember that something I would do quite often, go to these political functions. They also had the special Lincoln Day, it’s still a function they have. It’s a Lincoln day dinner around Lincoln’s birthday. They’d get very prominent speakers to come. I remember hearing Jack Kemp one year speak at that. As far as my dad was concerned, his involvement would be that he was chairman of the Ottawa County Republican Party, and, of course, was involved with all aspects of people who were running for office. My dad’s brother was Bernard Grysen, who was sheriff of Ottawa County for a long time. So the whole political arena, I guess, my dad and my uncle were very heavily involved with that. My dad was also instrumental with getting Jerry Ford to come to Holland during the year he was running for president (after President Ford took the Oval
Office after President Nixon resigned). That following election, when he was running against Jimmy Carter, Jerry Ford came to Holland and went to the Tulip Time Parade. I can remember my brother was escorting Susan Ford, and so back then, I guess it was probably 1976, that was the year I graduated from high school. My dad was president of the Holland Chamber of Commerce. He was on the Tulip Time Board. He was the president of the Zeeland Hospital Board. So his involvement with the Holland/Zeeland area was quite big. After he left WJBL, he took a job with a company called Holland Die Casting, which made parts for, at the time, the Chrysler Corporation. Back in the late 70s, early 80s, he was able to purchase that company. Right about that time, Chrysler Corporation almost went belly up. The United States government had to extend a loan to them in order to keep them floating. When they almost went belly up, that affected a large number of suppliers to their business, not only Holland Die Cast, but many other suppliers. My dad, at that time, I remember, was on the national news. They interviewed him, because it made a huge impact in the economy of the United States. Anyway, at that time, when Chrysler got back on track and everything, the banks were very leery of him keeping the company, they were afraid of the fallout on that, because they had extended him a lot of loans. So he struggled with that, and finally was able to find somebody who would buy the company. He did not want to file bankruptcy. Unfortunately, after my dad sold that company, the new owners were not interested in making a profit on it, and they were only interested in filing for bankruptcy. So after that, Holland Die Cast did go belly up. If you would look into the history of that company, it was located on Lakewood
Boulevard, near the overpass of US 31. Right now, all that’s standing there is a fence. What they determined after the company went bankrupt, they did soil testing and various things, and they found it to be highly toxic. So, that building sat empty for many years. Eventually they secured money from the former owners previous to my dad, through that trust of that family, to actually clean the place up. That took, I would say, probably five years for them to do all of the removing the building, cleaning out the sludge, doing all that. So for me, something that was my dad’s life, and my whole life, every time I drive by that spot, it’s very startling to me. It’s like, "Where did that go?" That was gone. I think right about that time, when my dad had to sell that business, was when he physically started becoming depressed, and he eventually needed treatment and was placed in a home. It all kind of stems back to when that Chrysler Corporation crises came along. At that time, he still was on the Zeeland Hospital Board, and the Holland Chamber of Commerce. Eventually, he just bowed out of those commitments. Now my dad is a resident of the Grand Rapids home for Veterans. He’s been there five years now. I’m trying to remember if I said everything about his involvement. I’m sure that there were other things that he had done at the time, too. I remember he started up the first ambulance company in Holland. It was called Priority Ambulance, and sold that to Mercy Ambulance, which services the Holland area, but at the time he had started that company up and provided that to the Holland area.

AP: Are there any things that you can remember him specifically doing, or the boards or committees that he served on specifically doing?
DB: What they had done? Well, I remember with Zeeland, he was instrumental in starting the drive to expand the Zeeland Hospital. I can recall that. As far as his job as mayor of Hudsonville, I know he was very involved in getting sewer and gutters in the Hudsonville area, that was a major thing. Going back to when he had Jerry Ford come to Holland, he was very instrumental in that. Just running the campaigns for the different elections. I guess as far as what he did in the area of politics, it would just be the different fund raising activities he might have done.

AP: What would you say the political arena is like in this area?

DB: Well, it's pretty staunch Republican. I don't really recall when that may have all taken place. From what I've read, it probably dates back to maybe the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln. Of course, that's when they have their Lincoln Day dinners, to honor him. It must have been back then that the Dutch people must have felt that way. Why my dad ever became so serious about politics, I really am not sure what turned his mind to be that way. Back then, too, I think people felt more civic-minded and felt there was a duty to your community to do those sorts of things. A very patriotic type of person. What a huge upheaval that was during the 60s, when the younger people on the campuses were so opposed to anything American. I think that was such a division in the country, because there were some people, especially from World War II, who were very patriotic, and that became really hard. In our home, we all felt that was a very hard thing when the president was being investigated for Watergate, and things like that, because it was somebody who was a Republican, and you just identified with that person. Around here, though, I think there's quite a bit
of apathy since that time. People don’t really care anymore. I think that just extends nationally, too.

AP: Since it’s so Republican, have there ever been any heated political discussion, to there just hasn’t been a Democrat group that countered?

DB: Right. But I think in the early stages, when there are people who are running, and the League of Women Voters might have special forums for people, even if it is one sided Republicans, it seems there are different people who express their views in order to win the primary. So it’s not just saying, I’m just a Republican.

AP: There are still choices to make.

DB: Yes. I guess thinking back, most of the time that my dad was involved with that, that was from the 60s to the 70s, basically. Thinking back to the Ottawa County Republicans, I wish I could remember more of the people who were involved in that. I know there was a woman very instrumental in that from the Grand Haven area.

(tape ends, turned over)

The Holland area has always maintained a very strong economy. At the time when Holland Die Cast was in operation, there are people who worked there for many, many years, who are still living today, so they would have a lot more memories of it, too, about that company especially. I know there’s a whole article, when the Holland Sentinel used to have a Sunday special edition section, there was one written about that company, and what happened to it. That was a very sad thing. But just this week I thought, too, when the newspaper announced Bil-Mar told some of their suppliers that they didn’t need their turkeys anymore, they told the farmers,
"We won't need you next year." It's like, in a smaller scale, but not any different, to what happened to my dad when Chrysler said they couldn't buy their parts. What do you do? It happens.

AP: Right, it's all connected. There's one auto plant on strike or shutting down right now, and it's not affecting other plants currently, but they say in a little while once they don't have this part from this one plant, the other plants can't complete their part, and they'll have to shut down, too.

DB: I don't know where the quote was, but it's something like, there's a turnover every 30 years, some business will die, and then something new will come. I guess, in my lifetime, seeing places like Point West, and Leisure Acres, and some of the stores in downtown Holland that have been there, that was true for them. Especially like Holland Die Cast. There's definitely nothing that's permanent. Looking back over my life, and just seeing things fall by the wayside, I'm glad that I am a Christian, and the Bible says: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. There will be all of these changes occurring, all the time. What a lot of people, I think, would say about my dad, what a sad thing to have happen to a man who is so instrumental in so many ways, in politics and business, but we cannot ever predict how your life will turn around, and it certainly did for him. It really changed for him. But that has been a very, for my family the transition from what he used to be to what he is now, it was so traumatic. That would probably be a good story to tell in another area, but right now, I just wanted to share his life, because back then that was a lot of his life, and what he did, and a lot of those areas in Holland that he had done.
AP: I was wondering, since you’ve had experiences in the Holland and Zeeland area, Hamilton, Overisel, and I’m not from this area, but I’m wondering how all the communities in this area function together, do they interrelate?

DB: As a homemaker, I just look at it as that. I’m living out in a rural area now. I shop in Holland, I go to Zeeland to the library. I rely on those places as where I would go. As far as the township is concerned, the political area, we’re in Allegan County, so there’s really not a tie in with Holland or Zeeland in that way, because they’re in Ottawa County. So that part of it, I’m sure they don’t really have anything to do with each other, persay. As far as the feeling of what it was like to move here to Overisel from Holland, it was like returning to Hudsonville, in that standpoint. When I grew up in Hudsonville, which is ten, fifteen miles east of here, at that point it was a smaller community, and everybody attended a church and went out of their way to be neighborly and spent a lot of time doing things as neighbors. I thought that was just wonderful when I moved here, because that is the approach they have here as well. When I lived in Holland, I got to know my neighbors and did things, but you felt a little bit more like, they just live there and you’re not going to really do a whole lot with these people. I had a friend that came from the Ludington area and moved to Holland, and there seems to be almost a non-acceptance of new people when they first come to Holland. They say that’s a Dutch thing.

AP: I’ve talked to people who have lived in Holland for twenty-plus years, but they have not come from Holland, and they still say that they feel like they’re still not from Holland. They still are aware of that.
That’s why I think the Newcomer’s Club got so big. If you look at Holland, and, in fact, my husband said this, too, when we were getting married and looking for a home to buy, he was adamant he would not move to the south side (which would be across the bridge, through downtown, and anywhere from 8th Street, south). He grew up on the north side, and it’s almost like in Holland, they’re separated from each other. Like, if you live on the north side, fine, go over there, or the south side… We eventually did find a home, and it was on the south side. We lived at 819 W. 25th Street, which was just off South Shore Drive, off Azalea. He thought it was really a nice change. The south side seems to be a little bit more friendly. The north side seems to be, you go, go, go, and you don’t have a lot of neighborly contact. So living there on the south side, too, that was kind of fun, because you could use the bike paths, that part of it, I really appreciate and miss about not having that here out in Overisel, is a bike path. It was quite close to where Dick DeVos’ house is, from the Amway Corporation. I can remember walking my kids in the stroller down the sidewalk, down South Shore Drive, and seeing the events he was holding there. He is the major Republican fund raiser for the area. I remember thinking, what’s this big crowd? Then looking in and, oh, there’s George Bush. He was having him in for a fund raising dinner while he was President. That part of Holland, that was a fun thing about living on the South Side, you would see those events happening. The lake itself, Lake Macatawa, I always thought it was pretty when the hot air balloons would come flying over the lake. I enjoyed that. But as far as the differences, or how we interrelate, I would say people that live out here in Overisel, we appreciate
that we don’t live there, but we like that we can go there. I guess that’s the whole reason why my husband and I built this house, and now live here. We had an opportunity to try and find property to build back at a time when interest rates were really low, and purposely looked for a place that would be outside of Holland, because we felt Holland had gotten so big, and we wanted our children to attend a school that was not a class A school, so... Where are you from?

AP: I'm from Bay City.

DB: OK. So you’re class A all the way.

AP: But talk about a city split, we have a big river through the middle of the city, and we have east side and west side. When you were saying that about Holland, that’s what it reminded me of.

DB: That was kind of the make up, and I think it still is, of Holland, kind of split like that. I guess right now, my concern about Holland is whether or not they are trying too much to imitate Grand Rapids. Grand Rapids now has the arena, and there are different things that they have, and so I think, this is great, let’s do this, and I really do believe there should be a new auditorium. I think the Civic Center is way outdated, they should have that, but not try and go attract major events like what Grand Rapids would do and everything. I think they should keep in mind that Holland is Holland. We have certain functions that we have a need, and they should build the auditorium to meet those needs, and not worry about trying to get big name acts in. As a person who goes to something, I don’t mind going to Grand Rapids to go to that. I don’t need to go to Holland just because it’s closer to go to that. They
should just try to make an auditorium for that, and keep in mind Holland, and the people of Holland, and what they need. Of course, I realize we have to make it economically viable, and they need the acts, maybe, to make a profit for themselves.

AP: Some people I've talked to are of the opinion that if it's a matter of being economically viable, and it's a good project, it should be given over to a private concern, and it's not a civic affair.

DB: I agree.

AP: The same thing people have expressed over Windmill Island. If it is economically viable, why isn't a private concern running it, and why isn't it purely commercial?

DB: I agree. I wonder where this has come from, other than the fact that right now there's so much Civic Pride because it's the Sesquicentennial of Holland, so they just feel so motivated to be involved and get these things started. But now, Hope College has just built that Haworth Center, and they had to come up with the funding for that through private means and everything. Maybe the city had a part in that. Of course, Ed Prince was such a major factor in getting downtown revitalized. I think that there's a lot of things to be proud of Holland. It was named the All American City. There is a lot of work being done, and having moved here, it's not because I dislike Holland, it's just that Holland had become too big. So that part of it. The city itself, I think, really has a lot going for it. I don't see a whole lot run down. The one thing I really miss is the Kentucky Fried Chicken on the corner of River and 16th when it closed down, and that was because of vandalism there. That used to be Sunday dinner for us after church.
AP: We used to do that, too.

DB: Now on the south side, there really isn't anything. We go to Blimpie now, but it's just not Kentucky Fried Chicken. We attend church in Holland yet, even though we live in Overisel. We go to Holland to a small Brethren church, it's called the Gospel Chapel. We'll be having a potluck picnic tonight at Kollen Park. It's kind of an annual event. For us, even though we live here, we still do quite a bit of that out in the Holland area. I understand they might change Kollen Park now, so that the road doesn't go along the water. If you want to come by the lake, you don't want to park by the water, and then eat or have recreation. It's kind of hard to fish, I guess, when you're right on the parking lot. That would be smart. I guess that's basically what I remember. Other than the years that I worked at Brooks Beverage. That company was so instrumental in providing soft drinks to different functions, like if they had a 5K run, or something like that. That company is very civic minded, too. They always seem to sponsor something that, if the city needs to have a sponsor for it, they seem to go out of their way to do it. That's a nice thing that they do.

AP: Were there ever any big issues involving unions in any of the big companies?

DB: I don't think that was ever an issue at Brooks. I know it was just an issue at Haworth. I think that if you would look at a company like Herman Miller in Zeeland, they started out as a company that was a family oriented company. I believe D. J. De Pree bought it from his father-in-law, Herman Miller. It has grown since then. Then, of course, Max De Pree was the head of that company. It became almost a philosophy of business. It's not a company where it's about the bottom line.
It seems like it was a company to live out a philosophy. That company, I think, is just higher up in the caliber of any of the other companies in that area, that they were thinking more of how to run the company as employee run, instead of management. That, I believe, did have a huge impact on all the other companies that Holland has. That employees had a major say. If you want to think back to Holland Die Cast, that was, I recall, very heavily unionized, and that was because it was an automotive supplier. Prince is automotive, too, but they’re not unionized. I can remember my dad having long evenings and weeks at the bargaining table with the unions and working that all out. I don’t know how many other companies had unions, but Holland Die Cast did have a union. As a Christian, I believe my dad would always approach it with them as, I am going to be fair with you. I don’t think there was ever a strike at Holland Die Cast. But, of course, there was just a lot of dialogue. I believe his goal was to always be a fair employer. He would try to be as honest as possible, and state that this is our business. (tape ends)

AP: …companies that were unionized had a better chance of getting pay increases, so you had to apply to get increase your wages to the War Labor Board, and if you were unionized, you were more successful usually than non-unionized, so that’s probably the big reason why they [Chris-Craft] did. A lot of people I’ve talked to, whether they’ve been at places with them or not, feel that if the employer would run the company the way he should, they would not be necessary.

DB: Well, the company, when my dad was employed before buying Holland Die Cast, it was owned by Herman Windolph, and Mr. Windolph was German, and quite
wealthy, and I think he just never felt an empathy for his employees. I think my dad was so important to the success of Holland Die Cast at the time, because my dad could be the person that could be on the floor with the employee, and represent management in such a way that it would be good for morale in the company. The whole thing that is the repercussions of what happened when it started to be difficult to find a buyer for your parts, I think environmentally, too, the impact that it had, it's all pretty sad. You'll have to drive by there the next time you're out that way. I wonder if I have a picture. Look here [referring to scrapbook of photos and news clippings], "We say thanks to our boys in Vietnam." See how these people were so patriotic. That was so difficult. I think it was when I was 16, they had a national small business dinner in Washington D. C., so my brother Dennis, who is two years older, and my mom and dad, we all went to Washington D. C. I remember going to the function at a huge hotel, and people came running in and said, "Nixon's on TV." And that was the night that he turned over the transcripts for his tapes. At the time, being in Washington D. C. was quite exciting. There were so many things happening. Nothing to do with Holland (laughs), but just the politics part.

AP: Are there any other things that we haven't covered that you'd like to talk about?

DB: As far as my interest in genealogy, maybe we could talk about that a little bit. Thinking about my dad, and then his mother, she is Gertrude Brookema, she's 98 years old. She's a resident of the care facility in Allendale. Her ancestry is to two different areas, which are quite predominant here in the area. One, her great grandfather was Gysbert Haan. Mr. Haan was the man who broke off from Van
Raalte, and thought Van Raalte was making a mistake by being affiliated with the Reformed Church of America. He seceded from that, and had several pastors and churches leave Van Raalte's church, and started what is now the Christian Reformed Church. That is her ancestry on her dad's side. On her mother's side was one of the first immigrants 150 years ago to the village of Graafschap, south of Holland. His name is Stephen Lucas. He was the leader of that group that came here. Mr. Lucas was allowing church meetings to be held in his home in that time in Germany. He spent time in prison because of it in Germany. That whole genealogy of Lucas is very interesting for the Holland area. That branch that my grandmother is in is very small. But there were very many other people, the Piers' and the Scholtens in this area. There is a book in the Herrick Public Library that has all the Lucas genealogy in it. There is also a small book in the Herrick Library that someone had done on their genealogy from Gysbert Haan. Right now I am working on the genealogy somewhat of that branch, but also specifically now from the branch that my dad is descended from. That part of the family had never been talked about, and it does not relate to Holland, because these people immigrated to Grand Rapids. My parents were both from Grand Rapids, but spent their married years in Hudsonville, and my dad, his working years, almost all in Holland. That's how that eventually came about. They both were from Grand Rapids. My dad graduated from Lee High School, my mom from Grand Rapids Christian High School. But that's kind of my family genealogy that comes from my grandmother, who's still living, and does quite well. Her life is an interesting story, too. She became a widow quite young, I think
she was only 40 or 41, when my grandfather died, who I never met. Then, approximately ten years later, she married Bernard Brookema, and they lived in Holland in an apartment on Lake Macatawa. I think it’s called Edgewater, it’s on South Shore Drive. I can remember as a child thinking that was such a thrill if I got to spend the night with my grandparents because they lived on the lake. But at the time, the lake was so polluted, and I can recall people calling it Lake Macatoilet, because it was so polluted. I do not recall, even though I got to go there, even swimming in it. That was probably the 60s, nobody ever swam in Lake Macatawa. Forget it. Thankfully, now, it’s less polluted and much better. That’s another change I’ve seen. My grandparents lived there in Holland for a long time. Then, eventually, they moved back to Hudsonville. I think Holland should take advantage of the water, because it’s something unique about Holland. What I really enjoy is they started up these cruises you can pay for and get on those bigger boats and take a ride around the lake. That is really good that they did that, because it’s expensive for a lot of people—who wants to have the expense of owning a boat, and buying a slip, and storing it for the winter? But you still want to have the fun of spending time on the water. So that’s nice about Holland. Going to the beach, that was a big event. For me, even all the way out in the Hudsonville area, when you graduated from high school, you always spent either the week after or the week of graduation out at the beach. I think it still is a big thing, and a problem, probably, because as a group of teenagers, you can get pretty rowdy. Back then, there was a lot of drinking and drugs and things like that. I can also recall when I was a little girl, I was being baby sat by my
neighbor, and my neighbor had a sister my age. She was already 16 or 17 and thought, why should I sit around with these girls, we were probably ten. She said, "We're going to Holland." She made us sit down on the floor of the back seat of the car so she could ride down 8th Street. At the time it was a two way street, and the teenagers would ride up and down 8th Street and look at each other's cars and talk to each other. Now, of course, you can't do that anymore. That was a nightly, or a Friday night thing. So, one night of my life I had to lay down in the back seat of a car so she could ride up and down 8th Street and talk to all the guys. (laughs) Kind of in a way, you look back at it and you think, that was so fun to do, and now as an adult, I think, good, they don't have that anymore. You become a person who's concerned about children and you don't want them to do any stupid, foolish things. I think Holland State Park, they still do that, but they don't ride around, they just park and walk around. But I just think that's important. That's like a ritual you've got to maintain or something. That's a big part for Holland, for young people, that they have a place to go like that. It just seems like all of a sudden a community becomes a real hot spot to do something like that. I'm trying to think of what else we did for fun in Holland. We went to the movie theater. That was very nice. Now we have these big theaters, and you walk in and you go off and look at a movie. But when you went to a movie in downtown Holland, it was special because the seats were very nice. I think I just really appreciate the architecture more than a newer modern thing. The Knickerbocker, how nice it is that that's maintained and kept up and everything. I think today, when I think about my children, will they know what it
would be like to do that? I think it’s good to keep things if it’s possible, and not destroy them. Just to keep it where people don’t forget what it was like before.

Right now in Overisel, the church here, that’s about 130 years old, is probably going to be demolished, unless they work it out with the city of Holland to have it transported to Windmill Island. I know that’s on the table right now, but not finalized. Unfortunately, this is not a building that’s salvageable, but it should be kept for historical purposes. Hopefully this church building will get used just as a museum piece of some sort. It’s unfortunate that Overisel Church is the only landmark of Overisel. There isn’t a water tower. So if anybody says, “where’s Overisel?” we say, it’s that one with that old church with the big, white steeple. Now that church will be gone. When we have a meeting to discuss the 150th for Overisel, I’d like to bring up the need to have something erected as a landmark of some sort. Holland, I think, is doing a good job about celebrating Holland.

AP: Well we covered a lot.

DB: I know we did!

AP: Well, we probably can just wrap up. Thank you very much for taking the time out today.