

Lee Bahrych interviewing Steve Arveschoug

This is Lee Bahrych coordinator of the Colorado Oral History Library. With me today is Steve Arveschoug, a former member of the House of Representatives. This interview is being taped at the state Capitol in Denver.

L.B. The first question I want to ask you is about your family history, about where you went to school and your educational background.

S.A. You know that's a difficult question for me to ask when people ask well where are you from. I have to give them a multiple choice kind of answer because my family moved around a lot. My parents actually met and were married in Pueblo and lived there a for a year or two and then moved to Trinidad. Trinidad is where my sister was born and from Trinidad, Colorado my parents moved to Hawaii. Believe it or not and my father was in the broadcasting business and he was doing some engineering work for a radio station on the island of Maui. That's where I was born, was in Hawaii. Then we moved around a lot from there. I think from Hawaii we went to Silverton, Idaho, what a change, what a contrast that would be and from Silverton, Idaho, the family moved to Aberdeen, Washington, this whole time my Dad was helping build radio stations and then he would move on to another one. In Aberdeen, Washington my Dad got a call to the ministry so he needed to get additional education in order to become an ordained minister and so we moved again from Aberdeen, Washington, we went to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and spent a year or two there and then we moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where my father studies at Grand Canyon Bible college in Phoenix for two years and then we moved to Ft Worth, Texas and in Ft Worth they have this Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and he got his seminary degree and then the family moved up to Spokane, Washington. All that took place before I finished eighth grade.

L.B. Oh my goodness.

S.A. So I ...

L.B. You were in many schools.

S.A. When I went to, I finished half of eighth grade in Ft Worth and the second half in Spokane, Washington. My parents are still in Spokane, Washington now, my Dad's retiring. During this whole time he stayed in the radio and television business while also preaching and being an ordained minister. So I went to high school in Spokane, Washington and then college in Montana. In Montana I did some work at the college I went to and got excited about politics and that sort of thing and actually did some interning for U.S. Senator Max Baucus, who's a Democrat senator from Montana. It was the first year he was elected to the U.S. Senate. Worked in his local field office and that sort of thing while going to college. After college I went to work in the radio business. It was kind of a generational thing, because my grandfather was in the broadcasting business, my Dad, and then I went into the sales side of radio and sold radio advertising in Butte, Montana for a number of years and established a relationship with the owner of the station and started helping manage radios stations and

then had an opportunity to move to Pueblo, with the guy that owned the station in Montana, he bought a station in Colorado, KCSJ and he was selling the station in Montana and so I could either stay there and work for the new ownership or have an opportunity to move to Pueblo, Colorado. So my wife and I took a trip to Pueblo. My wife being from Montana thought it was an ugly place and no green trees and just on the desert, she thought. For me it was like coming home, that's where my parents met, married. We had cousins that lived down there. During our vacations we used to go to Pueblo and visit in the summer time, so we made this huge circle and I ended up in Pueblo. Worked in the radio business for about eight years until I decided to do this crazy legislative stuff.

L.B. What made you decide to run for the legislature?

S.A. You know how it goes all the way back to a high school civics teacher I had. His name is Stan Challetts, he was also the assistant basketball coach. I didn't play basketball but that stood out because he was a very gregarious outgoing kind of guy and his attitude and personality just really made that subject of civics and how the political process work come alive for me. He had a real strong message about people could do anything they want to do if they really put their mind to it. So I kind of fell in love with that whole process there my senior year in high school and tried to continue that in my college studies and always had this idea that somehow I would be involved in public policy.

L.B. In public service, and you were elected as a Republican in a very Democratic area of the state. Tell me about that?

S.A. Yeah, people love to audit me, I had only lived in Pueblo for a short time, but I felt the time was right and wanted to do it and announced my candidacy and even the local Republicans in Pueblo, and there aren't necessarily a lot of them down there at least there weren't then, wondered who I was and what I was all about. This crazy guy with the last name that nobody could pronounce,

L.B. or spell.

S.A. Or spell (laugh)

L.B. Cause I still remember having it misspelled on the board up stairs.

S.A. Yeah I remember that. That first day I came in. I decided I wanted to do it so I announced in Pueblo and then in Canon City and then I just worked my tail off really throughout the process. I don't intend this to be boasting but people really didn't give me a lot of chance at winning. I had some opportunity to come up here and I met with Scott McInnis and I met with Speaker Bledsoe and a couple, Chris Paulson, you know, some of the leadership guys. They thought well maybe this guy has a chance, at least he's working hard and that's really what I did, that's the only thing I had going for me was that I was willing to work real hard. I think I just caught the incumbent by surprise. I was young, new name, in a Democrat district running as a Republican. The guy thought you know I just wouldn't have a chance but I worked pretty hard and had a lot of good grass roots support from, not really the

political insiders, but the worker bees, the people that really get all the work done, that stuff the envelopes and make the phone calls and that was the kind of effort...

L.B. Lick the stamps and ring the doorbells.

S.A. That's right, the guys who were the imparters of great wisdom and how campaigns should run, and who should run, that sort of thing, didn't think I had a chance but I managed to get the worker bees to help me out.

L.B. How did you feel when you knew you had won?

S.A. You know we didn't find out until it was about 2:30 in the morning. I can remember being in Canon City with my wife waiting for the absentee ballots to come in and I knew I had won in Pueblo but now I needed to know what happened in Fremont County. I was behind, no I was ahead by over two hundred votes, 249 votes and then they counted the absentee ballots. We waited, and we waited, and we waited, it was 2:30 in the morning and finally the clerks office, everybody wondering what's going to happen with this race. People were still there at 2:30 in the morning and I had lost some votes in that process but ended up winning by 102 votes.

L.B. Landslide Arveschoug.

S.A. Gee it was by the skin of my teeth. But it was exciting, I think my wife was, my wife was pregnant at the time and here I had my pregnant wife up till 2:30 in the morning and it was, she was ready to go home and I was in shock and a little stunned by the victory. But very..

L.B. A beautiful win though.

S.A. Yeah, that was exciting, I was very excited about it.

L.B. How did your family feel? Did they come up to see you be sworn in the first day?

S.A. My parents and my members of my church came up, my parents came down from Washington State and some members from my church in Pueblo came up and watched the swearing in and then we had lunch, it was during a terrible snow storm, I remember. It was the winter, January of '89 and a big snow storm and my wife was, I had already come up because I had to kind of get settled and my wife came up with my campaign manager and my parents. On the way to Denver, their car almost slid off the road, in fact they did a 360 in the middle of the road, going over Monument and almost didn't get here, but they managed after the car spun around to keep it on the road and make their way up, and that was an exciting time.

L.B. It was a memorable time. So then you were sworn in. Did Justice Rovira come over and swear you in? Do you remember what Justice...

S.A. I couldn't tell you what Justice it was.

L.B. What did you hope to do when you came up? What was going to be your goal?

S.A. You know I think I even had some things written down that I wanted to try to accomplish but the biggest, my biggest issues were trying to be assessable and available for people that I represented and then also then dealing very vigorously with how state government spends their money and what kind of spending priorities we have. This whole issue of taxes was a big issue in Fremont County, lot of the tax protests and even some of the first drafts on the quote Amendment 1 concept came out of some of the activists in Fremont County.

L.B. Oh I didn't know that.

S.A. There were two, there was a group, Douglas Bruce had a group in there, I can't remember their names now, there was a group of activists who had even put together their own newspaper because they were kind of very much anti-establishment in Fremont county and they were kind of a faction of the Republican party down there. They had, had drafts of Amendment 1 and were talking with Doug Bruce, and because of the strong personalities, you know how strong, Mr Bruce is, they couldn't come together on drafts so knowing that was a sensitive issue especially property tax, I decided that I needed to do a lot of work on that issue and pay attention on how we were spending people's money.

L.B. So that was their main issue, was property tax.

S.A. Property tax and for Fremont County, they of course and still are today, very interested in prisons and where they're going to be built and whether they will be built there and what happens.

L.B. Did you find the constituent work very heartening. Did you enjoy that part of it?

S.A. You know I did. At times it was very taxing because they're very demanding...

L.B. The reason I ask that question is so many telephone calls come in and they're all negative. And it's rare to get a phone call that says, Steve you did a great job.

S.A. Yes, that's true.

L.B. That a, sometimes that's very hard to handle day after day of nothing but negative letters and phone calls.

S.A. Yeah, I guess I kind of, and still try to look at that as a trying , an opportunity to find a solution. You know people would write and they have an issue with an agency of state government and if you can get in there and try to help them solve it, that, you may never get a thank you, and they may not be happy with the outcome but having made that attempt, I think gives you a sense of accomplishment. In some cases you can work through those constituent concerns and actually accomplish something and the more the better. I didn't mind that as much, I always liked doing the out, the town meeting and things and trying to respond to letters and sometimes the volume of mail though would be pretty rough and I

would take home boxes of correspondence that I didn't get to up here and take it home over the weekend and open it up and try and draft some responses and it can be taxing.

L.B. Did you find it difficult to work here without a any type of personal staff that you had to use the steno room and no one not even chairmen had a personal staff.

S.A. Yeah, that is a challenge. I think the system works pretty good though and it's a good way to economize. It makes it more difficult for those members who have to pursue a living outside the legislature too. If you've got more, if you've got full time you can kind of make that process work for you. If you don't have all the time because you're pursuing other livelihood, it makes it more difficult. Would have been easier to have had a personal staff person.

L.B. I always felt sad up in the House when I saw you young ones, as I will call you, leave because of family considerations. It's impossible for many of the young men and women to stay here when they have a family to support. There aren't many employers out there that will say you can take four months off or six months, when this isn't a four months job. It's weekends, evenings,...What was your first bill? Do you remember what it was?

S.A. I do as a matter of fact because it was in this committee room and it was with a guy that I come in contact with right now, John Fetcher, who runs a conservans, water conservancy district up on the Yampa River in the northwest part of the state. He's an avid sail boarder. Sail boards that you, you know like a surf board with a sail on it. I don't do it so I don't know but he want...

L.B. Like a surf board but with a sail on it.

S.A. They had the requirements to wear personal floatation devises and it was his mind that they should not have that requirement that they're not in a boat like a person and they have the board which acts as buoyancy for them if they fall off. So I, actually Chris Paulsen talked to me about this, maybe they had talked to Chris and he kind of threw it and said hey talk to Steve he'll.....

L.B. This will be your first bill.

S.A. And so it was to eliminate their requirement for the personal floatation devise and I can remember, what was the name of the Department of State Parks, Ron Holiday, a very nice man, he didn't want to trounce me, just to testify that it wasn't a very good idea. What happened was the bill died because it tied. It had a tie vote in committee.

L.B. In committee.

S.A. Right, and I guess we could have brought it back up at a later time if I could have got votes to switch, but John and I looked at each other and said well it's not an issue that's going to have a successful outcome at this time. I don't think they ever brought the subject back up.

But that was the first bill and I lost it and it was like ok now we go on to the next thing. It was kind of an odd thing for me to be carrying anyway but, that I think it was the first bill that I introduced.

L.B. What was the first bill that passed both Houses and was signed by the Governor?

S.A. You know I think that first session I had kind of a rough go. I think three of the bills I'd introduced had not passed but we came back for a special session and I carried legislation on a special session on prison overcrowding and so that would have been the first one that I can recall, I think, that we had to adopt and was passed and sent on to the Governor for his signature.

L.B. Once you were here and you understood the process what became your main focus? Your main interest, was it prisons?

S.A. You know I served on the criminal justice commission and representing Fremont County I had that on my plate, but the biggest issue for me was control of government spending. I did a fair amount of homework on what other states did in terms of how they controlled growth and general fund expenditures, what other funding or spending limitations used. Did a lot of research on the system that Colorado had with the 7% general fund limit and where that came from and the fact that it was only statutory...

L.B. Where did that come from?

S.A. That was who passed that, Betty Neil used to remind me of that all the time, and I cannot recall the name now.

L.B. He was the Senator from Pueblo, wasn't he?

S.A. I don't think so Lee, but I'm not positive. But they had a...

L.B. Kogovsek, was that his amend, the 7%?

S.A. It might have been, that name sounds familiar..

L.B. But I don't have any background on that, I just know that there was a spending limitation of 5% a year increase, something like that..

S.A. Well there were some local government, and I don't know what came before the 7%. Betty Neil would be a good one to talk to about that because she, I had asked her at one point where the 7% came from and she said you know, we had so much money at that time we were all just spending it and somebody just came up with the idea, you know we should put some kind of limit out there and they just threw 7% out and people said ok and it was passed.

L.B. Were any of your recommendations put into effect?

S.A. You know I guess I have the name sake of having, lets refer to it as the Arveschoug spending limitation. Something that I had worked on for a couple of years, and had two or three sessions to try and get it passed. The statutory limit that now governs the states general funds expenditures is somewhat of an elaborate process, it's the lesser of 6% a year growth in general fund over the prior year, or the rate of growth in total personal income. It's not how I intended that limit to work when I first introduced the bill but as you know this process kind of kicks things out the other end and it looks a little different than when it started, but I feel very proud of that limit as I have done research I was finding out that based on the statutory limit before, legislature was exceeding even the 7%, it was only a statutory limit so any time they wanted to spend money over 7%, they'd just write a provision in the bill. But this expenditure is outside the 7% cap and they were doing that frequently so if you run the numbers...

L.B. So the 7% really wasn't effective.

S.A. If you run the numbers against that 7%, we were in the double digit growth in a lot of years and..

L.B. I didn't realize.

S.A. I looked at that and I tried to compare the figure, 11% sticks out for me, there were a lot of years that we were 10 and 11% in growth from one year to the next in general fund expenditure. When you compare that to the rate of growth in, the way I like to refer to it is, the rate of growth in individual or family income isn't growing at 11%, their lucky to keep pace with inflation. The state government is growing at a pace that exceeds by three fold our ability to keep pace the with it where our income growth, then we're going to have a crash there somewhere because the legislature will continue to go back for more and more taxation. That was at a time prior to Tabor, we didn't have limits on the ability of the legislature to increase taxation. They didn't have to go to a vote of the people, it was merely a legislative act that could constitute that. So that was a real motivating factor to me and I worked two real hard years to get the legislative prevision passed and then worked on trying to get a compromise or an alternative put together for Amendment 1. Carried that in two sessions as well and fell short three votes in the House but we still had the statutory limit, the passage of Amendment 1 actually served to make the statutory limit that we had put in place permanent because it requires the legislature cannot detract...

L.B. Cannot change it because it's constitutional.

S.A. So it, I guess we'll always kind of have my name attached to it until somebody amends the constitution, or goes in and does something with the limit, either lowers, they could lower the limit, make it more restrictive and still stay within the guise of the constitution but...

L.B. I remember when your bill was being debated and I remember the comment that someone said, I think it was Lyle Kyle, but I'm not certain, that if we don't do this there's going to be a constitutional amendment. That's exactly what happened. so we didn't, it doesn't give the legislature any lea way because they have to follow that Amendment 1.

S.A. Actually we got my bill and then we ended up getting Amendment 1. I didn't perceive my bill as an alternative to Amendment 1 statutory change. I, some people look at it and make that association still today in the Legislature they said well you know we could pass the Arveschoug thing and that was suppose to head off the amendment, that wasn't my intent. My intent with the Arveschoug Bird limitation was to deal with this issue of out of control general fund expenditure grow from year to year and the issues of Amendment 1 I tried to deal with later in my referred measure that we weren't able to get passed, but statutory limit was needed because we were spending money too quickly.

L.B. What committees did you serve on?

S.A. I served on Business Affairs & Labor Committee, have a lot of fond memories about Betty Neil being the chairperson here and trying to keep the young guys in order half the time. Also on House Education Committee. Later served on the Appropriation Committee.

L.B. Did you ever want to be on JBC?

S.A. I think if I'd have stayed on another term I probably would have asked to be considered for the Joint Budget Committee. Most of my work dealt with fiscal issues. I had the experience of the Appropriation Committee and would have felt that would have been a natural step. I may not have gotten the opportunity cause I didn't have the seniority but would have been looking to that. Yeah.

L.B. How do you feel the education is in the state today? Do you like the way that they're funded, do you feel that needs to be changed?

S.A. You know I, there's been a number of changes in my absence with the school finance that I can't really speak to how it looks now. I know the kind of basics of school finance are still there. The legislature appears to be putting in considerable amounts of money into K-12 education each year. Just from the outside looking in now it appears that there isn't the need of discussion about the quality of the education we're getting for our investment. That was always an issue with me, I can remember standing up in the budget caucuses and fighting over how much more to give K-12 and many of us would ask what are we getting for the investment. We got a report that just came out in Pueblo a week ago that nearly 40% of the freshman that started at Central High School in Pueblo will not finish, did not finish, and did not graduate with their class this past graduation here two weeks ago. Then they did a series of where some of those went, many of them ended up in jail, some of them were drop outs, some pursued their GED. Then the public is concerned about that..

L.B. They should be.

S.A. ..about the quality of education, the drop out rate. But you don't necessarily see that discussed in the context of how much more money to give K-12 and that, that concerns me. I must admit I sent my son to a private Christian school so I'm not in the system with our children and I don't intend to be until, probably until middle school. I still have concern about where that system is headed and the quality of education.

L.B. It's an ongoing problem, and I know that the financing of public education has changed. When I was talking to a former Speaker, Dave Hamil, he said that was a big issue when he was Speaker and they made a very large change while he was Speaker and you know it used to be that the local school board and the local people had almost control of their school and I.... Do you think that the public understood the issue that you were dealing with down here about public spending that the citizens out there on the blocks really understood that the state was spending more than the 7% that was quoted?

S.A. I tried to do my part in communicating that, in fact the strong tenant of my second, my run for second term was the need to adopt the spending limitation proposal because we were growing beyond people's ability to pay. That was the line I used. State Government spending was growing at a pace beyond our ability to pay for it and we needed to reign it in and put some limits on it. I think the average person that has to write the checks and looks at their property tax notice, even though property taxes aren't a real component of our general fund, but as they make those payments, are very aware of the impacts it has on their ability to meet their family's obligations. I was always, at least, always tried to be more sensitive to, the citizens family budget than I was to the state's budget. To the extent I could help them by controlling the state's budget spending, I felt that they as a family then would have the opportunity to make the economic decisions that they need to make.

L.B. Now you served four terms, four years, two terms.

S.A. Two terms.

L.B. Those two terms were under Speaker Bledsoe.

S.A. A....no the first term was and the next term....

L.B. Under Speaker Berry?

S.A. Under Speaker Berry, right.

L.B. So you served under two speakers. Did you find much difference in their leadership?

S.A. I think there's different style there. I think Speaker Bledsoe came from a different generation, pre-gavel, as we were talking before. Where the process was run a little bit tougher and the rules were different. Speaker Berry had a different set of rules to try and govern by and I think there was probably a little greater sense of cooperation between both sides of the House.

L.B. I think too Speaker Bledsoe was from a rural community and Speaker Berry was an urban, came from a urban community, and I think that surely made a difference. What changes do you see in the state government? Say from today as when you served?

S.A. Well, I really don't know.

L.B. Do you think term limitations are making a big difference?

S.A. Well you just look at the new faces here and a lot of it doesn't necessarily have to do with term limits. That I think will have its impact in this next go around. But in this last legislative session here, as I was coming to testify before committees, there's a lot of different new people. Most of that is a self-imposed limitation, people like me getting out for personal reasons or whatever. Or the voters having different ideas about who ought to represent them. So there's a lot of natural turnover. I'm strong believer in term limits and I understand that's going to have some impact in this process when we start losing a lot of the veteran members who have the strong legislative history and know why we respond to certain issues a certain way but I think there is enough to be gained by having new perspective and new enthusiasm and different people have the opportunity to serve with term limits, that it outweighs any of the negatives.

L.B. What changes do you see here in the Capitol, do you see many changes? In the physical part of the Capitol?

S.A. The outside grounds are different, they're doing some different landscaping and you know I come in and out so quick I probably don't even notice half the changes that were made.

L.B. What's your favorite spot here in the Capitol?

S.A. Geez, My favorite spot would have probably have been sitting on the House floor at my desk all by myself at 6:30 in the morning, going through my mail when no-one else was there.

L.B. (Laugh) I'm surprised how many people say their desk and chair on the House chamber floor was their favorite spot in the Capitol.

S.A. Yeah, it's quiet and you have the grandeur kind of to yourself and you can kind of get the work done you need and think without the interruption.

L.B. Are you pleased that only staff and members can be on the House floor unless someone is an invited guest? Would you like it more open? I'm saying, say lobbyists, other state officials, citizens, other people might have access to the floor.

S.A. I don't think lobbyists should have access to the floor. But I think generally invited guests can come and if the members have people from their district that show up or what have you, that's kind of an open process, you can sit around the side, you can always sit in the gallery. I think to a certain extent you have to keep that process functioning and just the practical side of it is if you open up those doors to anybody, just trying to keep the process moving would be more difficult.

L.B. Was it difficult for you, your first session, to understand the process and know how the bills flow through the process and to get started. Do you feel that you could have had more training?

- S.A. It's hard to train for, you know you can have kind of the bookwork training on exactly what the rules say. The training of the personalities that make those rules come to life is something you just have to gain as you go through the process. So yeah, that first session was a real learning experience. I think you just have to go through it to get a good grasp. I would always try to read the rules that pertain to what I was wanting to do in advance so I knew exactly, hopefully, I knew what I was talking about in terms of what the rule might say. It doesn't mean you're going to win the debate necessarily. Some one might have a different perspective and the guy with the gavel might decide totally differently. But part of it just is time and study and the rules and the other part is just learning through hard knocks.
- L.B. And being there.
- S.A. You've just got to go up to the mike and make a motion and introduce a bill and just learn through that hard knock process.
- L.B. If you could change one thing back to the way it was, what would you change? Maybe bring back an elected official or change the rooms or change the way we do things, what would you do?
- S.A. Oh, geeze. I don't know I'll have to come back to that question.
- L.B. Steve, people seem to be more pessimistic about politics and people who serve in politics. Do you think that's a genuine feeling out there or is this just the way we sometimes perceive it from when we read the newspaper articles?
- S.A. You know I think people are generally suspect about the process and the people involved in the political process. Not necessarily having anything to back that up it just kind of becomes a part of the culture that we makes jokes about politicians and the process and about how nothing ever gets done and that sort of thing. So it becomes part of the culture. I think though there are legitimate things that people ought to be concerned about. Not necessarily with what happens in the State Capitol or county commission chamber somewhere in the state of Colorado, that when we look at what's going on in Washington, D.C. or what's not going on, people get frustrated by that inaction and then that carries over to every branch of, or level of government.
- L.B. Do you think a lot of this is what they read in the press, what they read in the papers, what they hear on radio, do you think that that contributes a great deal to this....
- S.A. I think naturally the media plays or puts on the front page or leads with the story that often times is the most negative things. What you don't necessarily hear about in the media is the time commitment that people put into it, the personal sacrifice, the honesty that people are putting into their job. You only hear about the person that messed up. So you don't get a balanced perspective and that to a great extent shapes this culture of looking askance at the political process and politicians, because we only get a part of the story.

- L.B. I've always felt very proud of Colorado because we have such a clean government. The legislature is, I mean I've never heard of a vote buying up in the House or the Senate or anything from the Governors office. I just felt we have a very clean legislature and I'm very proud of that.
- S.A. You know the one thing that I used to do when I used to go out and speak at town meetings, especially at the high school students and things and I'd ask them to give me their very first impression when I say the word politician. I'd ask their teacher to not say anything and I'd ask the students to be very frank with me, to tell me the first thing that comes to your mind when I say politician. There'd be a little bit of silence there and then one wanting to go first and then someone would CROOK, and then once that got started, A CHEATER, SCANDAL. that sort of thing, so that would be the kind of stuff that would come out. Then I would look them in the eye and I'd say do you really believe that to be the case? Then I would have a discussion about, do you think all politicians are the same, just like all the teachers, I'd ask them are all your teachers exactly alike in the school. Are some better than others. Well yeah, you know Mrs. So and So she's a great teacher and others are better. You think some politicians are better than others? Well yeah, I'm sure that's the case there too. Then I ask, are all students created the same. No some students do better than others. And wouldn't that be true with politicians as well, some do better than others, some make mistakes and some don't make as many mistakes. Then if they really still believe that the process was corrupt and terrible, then I would tell them they have the responsibility to get involved and change it. You would get some pretty frank responses to that question. But they say that in part because of what they're hearing at home from Mom and Dad and what they read in the media, without really thinking about it. That we're not all, one guy falls doesn't mean we're all bad.
- L.B. Did you find it, did you ever find it difficult to make a vote on the House floor, that might have gone against your own personal philosophy but you had to represent your district.
- S.A. You know the one, there was a bill that Bill Jerke carried, you may remember, it was on credit unions. The credit unions and the banks. It was in the Business Affairs and Labor Committee and we had it, we had to move the hearing to the Old Supreme Court Chamber because it was just packed with people. Very tough lobbying, the committee passed it out. I got, there are a lot of credit unions down in Pueblo as you might guess. I got tons of, I had never gotten so much mail. People saying how dare you vote for that. Well I looked at that and I looked at all the weighing in on the issue from my constituents saying that the vote that I had made was wrong and they would hoped I would change it on the floor.. The galleries were full, what ended up happening was Bill Jerke went to the mike and he said I'm withdrawing the bill. I can't remember exactly the move that he made, but in essence the bill was dead, didn't go any further and the credit union folks had kind of won the day. Well I had sent out a letter prior to that and finally said hey, let me tell you why I voted the way I did, here's what I believe, but you guys are, you know, you're who I'm representing if you feel more strongly and there are enough of you out here knocking on my door about it, then fine I'll change my vote but that wasn't what I considered to be a core issue of personal belief, that had to do more with what was fair in terms of the market place and competition between banks and credit unions.

L.B. Would you have found it difficult to make a vote against your personal belief if you felt that's what your district wanted?

S.A. It wouldn't have been easy, but there are certain core things that I believed in that hopefully I articulated during my campaign process that people knew I stood for. If a vote came down which may not be to the liking of my constituents but I held strong beliefs about, that kind of vote does not come easy as you know. You wish there was a maybe button with those other two. But they hopefully knew going in what you stood for and you have to vote that way even if it isn't to their liking.

L.B. Difficult vote. Many a time I sat behind the front desk and I was glad I didn't have to vote. I heard one gallery aide one day take a group through the gallery and she was explaining the buttons down on your desk and she said now if they vote the green button their voting yes and if vote the red button their voting no, and somebody said well what is that other button? She said that's if they want to vote maybe.

S.A.(Laugh) that's the white button, the page button.

L.B. Well Steve, any stories you want to tell, anything that you want to remember?

S.A. You know the one thing that I'll relay that's just a real motivating factor to me to leaving the legislature. My wife came down to visit me, this was in 1991, no it was in 1992 session, it was my last session.

L.B. Your last session.

S.A. She was pregnant with our, what I found out later, was our daughter, my son was just about to turn three years old. They came up from Pueblo on the bus. Cause I was here. They came up on a Thursday and they came up on the bus and that night I met them at the bus depot and we spent the night in a hotel and I had an Appropriations Committee meeting the next morning at what ever time we would meet, 7:30 or...

L.B. 7:30, yeah they were early meetings.

S.A. My wife wasn't due for about three weeks so we didn't think it was a problem. So she came up and I woke up the next morning, got ready to go, and she said Steve you know I really don't feel good. I don't.... I said well if you need anything I'll be at the.. call me at the Capitol, I'll meet you for lunch, you know have fun with Tony and then... No sooner was I in the Appropriations Committee meeting, we were in the middle of a bill, about ready to vote on a list of ten bills or whatever we had and one of the staff people, I can't even remember who it was, brought a note, set it in front of me and all the note said was your wife's water broke. So I got up and I, Jeff Shoemaker was sitting next to me and I leaned over and said my wife's having a baby, I've got to go. Leaned over to Tony Grampsas, who was chairing the committee and as I was going out the door he said something about hey we're having a baby. Well I didn't know where my wife was. She...

L.B. Oh you didn't?

S.A. I came here and I called and she drove herself to the Capitol. So I met her in the parking lot right over here...

L.B. But you didn't know where to find her, you just saw the car?

S.A. She was at the hotel but when I came to find out to make the call she had already left and she was driving herself to the Capitol. She was in labor at the time. Going through traffic with my little three year old son and driving up to the Capitol and I met her in the parking lot and I said how are you doing and she said Steven, I think I'm going to have the baby and so we came into the Capitol and we were off the house floor and I called the doctor down in Pueblo and said should we drive back to Pueblo. No, no, you'll end up having the baby on I-25, stay here. So my wife's in the lounge off the House chamber in labor and we're trying to find a doctor that can deliver our baby here in Denver. So my son who was born in Pueblo teases his sister now that she 's from Denver and he's from Pueblo because she was born in Denver and almost born right here in the Capitol.

L.B. Right here in the Capitol, but you did get her to the hospital.

S.A. Got her to the hospital and it was probably half hour, forty-five minutes after we got her there that she had the baby.

L.B. Had a little girl.

S.A. Had a little girl.

L.B. And that made you decide that you wanted to stay in Pueblo?

S.A. I had other priorities, I loved the work I was doing in the legislature, I didn't necessarily like being gone all the time but had other, two little gems that I had to help take care of so.... I had made my wife a commitment that she could finish school and I had promised that when we got married because I had finished college and she hadn't quite finished. We'd been married ten years at that time and she said Steve, she went back to school to be a nurse and she said Steve if you're going to run again then I'm going to have to quite school because I just can't raise the two kids, be in school and your gone. So you have to make a decision. So it was a very difficult decision and the birth of our daughter kind of put it over the top. Just decided I had to meet(tape ran out, there doesn't seem to be another tape)