07-21-2016

Levin, Phillip ~ Oral History Interview

Maggie Allen

Recommended Citation

Levin, Phillip. Interview by Maggie Allen. *Voices from the Science Centers*. Voices from the Fisheries, NMFS, NOAA. 21 July 2016.

This oral history was produced in 2016 as part of the *Voices from the Science Centers Oral History Initiative* conducted by *Voices from the Fisheries* with funding by the NMFS Office of Science and Technology.

Voices from the Fisheries
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543

Interview with Phil Levin, Ph.D. by Maggie Allen

Summary Sheet and Transcript

Interviewee

Levin, Phillip

Interviewer

Allen, Maggie

Date

July 21, 2016

Place

Northwest Fisheries Center
Seattle, Washington

ID Number

VFF_ST_PL_001

Use Restrictions:

Biographical Note

Phillip Levin was born in Champaign, IL in 1962. He studied at the University of Texas receiving his Bachelor's in Zoology. During college, a fish class led to his interest in marine biology and field work. After teaching marine science at a San Antonio high school, he attended the University of New Hampshire where he received his Ph.D. in Zoology. He then was an Assistant Professor at Texas A & M before he joined NOAA Fisheries at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center in 1999 as a Research Fisheries Biologist. As of this interview, he was completing his tenure as a community ecologist and conservation biologist during which he served as the lead for the Ecosystem Science Program since 2007 and Nearshore Ecology Team at NMFS NWFSC. In addition to his research and administrative duties, he worked with the native people in Haida Gwaii, British Columbia and founded both the Oceans Tipping Point Project and the Oceans Model Forum. Dr. Levin left NMFS to take a joint role as a Professor of Practice at the University of Washington School of Environment and Forest Sciences as well as the Lead Scientist for The Nature Conservancy. He will also serve as an adjunct professor at the University of Washington's School of Fisheries.

Scope and Content Note
Interview contains discussion of: fisheries, ecology, invasive species, Nature Conservancy, Northwest Fishery Science Center, technology and fisheries, workplace diversity, collaboration, Oceans Tipping Point, Ocean Model Forum, working and living in a Haida Village.

Phil Levin's interview is a candid snapshot of pieces of his life's work from collecting and analyzing data from the fisheries he studied on while attending the University of New Hampshire to his current work as Program Manager at NOAA. He discusses his work with the Haida people in British Columbia as well as his decision to leave NMFS to return to academia.

Indexed Names
Correia, Peter
Hubbs, Clark
Sail, Peter
Varanasi, Usher

Transcript----RD_001

Maggie Allen: This interview is being conducted as part of the Voices from the Science Centers project funded by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. It is also part of the Voices from the Fisheries project that is supported by National Marine Fisheries Service Office of Science and Technology. I am Maggie Allen and today I am speaking with Phil Levin at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center in Seattle, Washington. It's July 21st at 1:30 p.m. Phil Levin, a community ecologist and conservation biologist, was born in Champagne, Illinois in 1962. He received his Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of New Hampshire and joined NOAA Fisheries in 1999 as a research fisheries biologist. In 2007, he became the program manager for the Ecosystem Program department. Phil is currently, for a few more days, the Acting Division Director of the Conservation Biology department. Thanks, Phil, for doing this with us. Why don't you start by telling us how you came to be here from growing up in Illinois where it all started.

Phillip Levin: You want the whole story?

MA: Your whole life story. Whatever you think. Basically how you came to be working here as a program manager.

PL: Ok, so basically what happened was I moved to Texas some time ago when I was nine and I ended up staying in Texas until college so I went to the University of Texas and I was a zoology major there. One of the classes I took was a fish class, and it was a fun class because it was me, I was a senior and then there was two graduate students who only occasionally came to class. So

sometimes I would go to a lecture class and the professor would come in, his name was Clark Hubbs, he was very famous in fish biology. But he would walk in, go to the board say hello and then start lecturing for an hour to only me, and there was something about that that I found interesting. I always just kept going and he started inviting me out into the field with him and so I think I just got excited about fish just because he was excited about fishing. He knew everything about fishing. You would go to a muddy hole and there would be all kinds of cool stuff in there that I didn't even know, so there was this uncovering the mystery of it. So I graduated but I didn't really know what I wanted to do and so I decided to teach high school for a while so I taught high school marine biology in San Antonio for five years, I think. Because it was marine biology and I was in San Antonio meant taking groups of kids down to the coast and down there, there was a program that University of Texas had where they would take school groups out on research vessels for the day. You would do all kinds of sampling and again it was the same sort of thing as with Hubbs that was cool. It was dirty Texas water and you would drag a net and it was amazing what came out of it. Especially with high school kids, my excitement was amplified by all the fifteen year old minds. That kind of reverberated back on me so I got more and more excited and ended up going to grad school in New Hampshire. I ended up in New Hampshire because I was sort of looking around, I was going to say "Googling" but this was pre "Googling" it was '88, and I found a guy who basically had just moved there from University of Sydney. He was sort of a mid-career guy who was the most famous coral reef ecologist of ever. I guess at least a coral reef fish ecologist, his name was Peter Sail. He sort of was one of the first people to actually do research using scuba. It just seemed really cool. It never occurred to me that I wouldn't work on the Great Barrier Reef even though he was in New Hampshire. I'm not very smart but I moved to New Hampshire. I was actually moving away from Texas so that seemed pretty far. I ended up doing diving research in New Hampshire and Maine, up all the way up to Newfoundland. I worked just around fish ecology stuff, nothing very applied. Although towards the very end of it, my time there, something happened there that I realized something that sort of changed my career. All my study sites which were kelp forests largely disappeared. They disappeared within in the space of about a year as a result of two invasive species that were simultaneously working together. There was one bryozoan that would come in and grow on the kelp blades and they would make the kelp blades brittle and heavy. Then storms when came and so it just wiped out all the kelp. They could have grown back but they didn't because there was a second invasive species algae that came in that could out-compete the kelp so all the kelp beds disappeared. They transformed to this invasive algae called codium which turns out to be a terrible habitat for fish, crustaceans like lobsters and crabs, and even small crustacean like arthropods that fish would eat. I think that it was something that made me realize that although it was kind of cool to just think about basic ecology and what drives fish to do what they do, the real world was changing and changing really quickly so I then started doing more applied work.

So I went from there and I started working on grouper in North Carolina for my post doc so it became more of a fisheries things, fisheries and habitat essential fish habitat stuff. And then I got my first job as an Assistant Professor at Texas A&M. [Is this too much? Am I just rambling? Are you going to edit that out?] I went to Texas A&M as a Marine Ecologist, and this is where the story gets interesting. This was actually my dream was to become a tenured track professor in a major research institution. Unfortunately, it was in Galveston, Texas and my wife was from New York City. She did not have a natural affinity towards the seven hundred and forty seven point sources of pollution or the seven Super Fund sites of Galveston Bay. I only lasted there a couple of years, three years. They threatened me with tenure and then I quit. I didn't have a job but I had grant money to do the two things that I talked about. One was to continue my work on groupers and grouper habitat use and the other was to look at invasive species in the Gulf of Maine and their effect on fisheries. So, I didn't have a job but I had money to live. I moved to Big Sur, I lived off the grid and then I would drive into town, hop on a plane, and go do my work. That was fun. Then I had kids, then I got stressed. That was 1998 and at that time I had never considered working for NMFS. In fact, I told my grad students never work for NMFS and they remind me of that until this day. I saw a job up here. My brother- in-law lived up here and I recognized one of the names of the people that worked here. That was Peter Kareiva. For a short time Peter Kareiva who was a professor at the University of Washington and is now a member of The National Academy of Sciences worked here. He put together this group called the Cumulative Risk Initiative. This was five people who were brought in who had no real experience in fisheries issues in the Northwest. I think I was the only fish person. There was a leech person, somebody else did biomechanics of slugs. There was a zebrafish genetics person. There was people who were talented but not experienced. The idea I think Peter had was to bring in people who could think outside the box of the issues of the Northwest especially around salmon and the breaching of the Snake River dams and so that was our primary focus at first. That is how I ended up here, mostly because Kareiva was here and he was then and continues to be a superstar. I wanted to learn from him.

MA: And how did you then get to where you are now as the Acting Division Director?

PL: So then, OK, I guess I was fairly successful in my role in the Cumulative Risk Initiative. I had worked on all sorts of salmon conservation issues. Peter then decided after three years to leave NMFS and became the Chief of Science for the Nature Conservancy. That meant my mentor and everybody's sort of intellectual rouge was gone. There was this leadership vacuum that needed to be filled, I guess, and so the director at that time of our lab was Usher Varanasi and she recognized this and asked me if I would want to put together a group of people that was like the Cumulative Risk Initiative but was more focused on groundfish issues because at that time, the salmon stuff was kind of I wouldn't say solved, but the crisis had passed and there was a lot of work to do. It didn't need this "hit squad" we had. Groundfish had crashed and it was really a state of emergency for a lot of the coastal fisherman and so she thought that maybe we

could put together a similar team to address groundfish issues. She asked me to lead it and I did. That was 2002 and we put this together again, kind of a team that actually didn't work on groundfish, didn't know anything about groundfish but who had a variety of different talents. The idea was that I could take them and mix them with people who actually knew something about the fish and try to come up with innovative approaches to really an age old problem so that is what we did. The program was fairly successful. So then a few years later, we moved from where we were in the FRAM Division which is Fisheries, Resource, Analysis and Monitoring which is largely the fisheries group. We moved over to the Conservation Biology group to join some other ecologists and conservation biologists. We went from, at that point, a group of maybe six or seven people and by moving over to FRAM we combined with some other groups. We ended up at our peak being maybe sixty people including FTEs [full time employees] and contractors. We grew quite a bit. The other big change we did at that time was to merge with the Human Dimensions group so we explicitly began to include Human Dimensions group as part of ecosystem science around that time…which I still think is unique for NMFS.

MA: You think the Northwest Fishery Science Center is unique in that it includes the Human Dimensions more than others?

PL:I don't...not that it includes Human Dimensions, it's just that there is Human Dimensions work. The Human Dimensions people are integrated with ecologists in an ecosystem science program rather than separate. We don't have the social scientists organizationally separate from the ecologists. They are integrated and the hope was that this would foster collaboration. I think it's probably worked.

MA: Okay, and now you are moving to the University of Washington tomorrow, right? Or next week?

PL: Not until Monday.

MA: Not until Monday, Okay. And so what position, what are you taking over, over there?

PL: So my position will be, it's a joint position with the University of Washington School of Environment and Forest Sciences and The Nature Conservancy. The Nature Conservancy is basically funding the position. I'll be the Lead Scientist for the Nature Conservancy and but also be Professor of Practice it's called at the University. I will be, I guess it's like the name sounds, so I am expected to...well, I have a reduced teaching load and administrative responsibilities in exchange for actually doing real conservation with TNC…The Nature Conservancy. I will still have grad students and so forth. Hence, Professor of Practice.

MA: Yeah, and that's mainly at the School of Environment and Forest Sciences?

PL: Yeah.

MA: Yeah, Okay.

PL: And I'll be adjunct in the School of Fisheries as well.

MA: What do you think you'll teach class wise?

PL: I don't know. I think if it's up to me I will teach every other year a class called "Conservation for Poets". Then on the other, every other year, some kind of upper level conservation-y class.

MA: What's "Conservation for Poets" like?

PL:I have no idea, I just like the title so I will figure it out later... [laughter].

MA: So what has been your project you've worked on while you were here that you have been most proud of?

PL: Hm, I don't know, it's hard to pick out one. I mean, I think the thing that I'm most proud of generally and it's sort of independent of the projects is everything we have done has been very collaborative and interdisciplinary especially the last ten years or so. I think what I am most proud of is our ability to cross disciplines and produce innovative products because of that. So whether it's combining ecology and oceanography or anthropology and ecology or whatever I think for me that's been the most satisfying part and I think the most useful.

MA: Have there been a lot of challenges with the collaboration or has it been mostly smooth?

PL: Um, not that I'm going to talk about. [laughter] I mean I would say there are institutional challenges within a government agency in terms of crossing institutional boundaries so that is always one thing I have struggled with is basically the inherent lack of flexibility of a government agency. And trying to come up with ways to break down those sorts of barriers that are just old and institutional. Same is true in universities but there are somewhat fewer barriers although there are still barriers. Yeah, I mean universities have departments so you are evaluated based on your expertise within a particular discipline. Therefore interdisciplinary work always become a challenge because you are working at the margins of many disciplines instead of at the core of one.

MA: So what changes do you, what do you see as the future of your field? What do you see that's maybe on that topic?

PL: Um, the future of the field....Well, I think so it depends on what my field is. So if we, you know I think I've been focused on ecosystem approaches to fisheries management. I think that field is, well when I started, was fairly marginal. It has become important although still not essential. And I think within the next few years, it will become a core capability of NOAA and all fisheries science because we're living in a world where we have extreme events happening now all the time related to climate change, invasive species, habitat loss. All these things are affecting fish. So without an ecosystem approach becoming central we are just not going to be able to manage effectively. Likewise I think the incorporation of people into our thinking has been critical because the cliché is that we don't manage the ecosystem, we manage the people. If we don't understand why people do what they do and the effect of either the environmental changes or management changes on people then we will fail.

MA: And what is the best way you think to go about doing that? Do you think more awareness? Education?

PL: Well, part of the reason why I'm going to the university is I think interdisciplinary training is crucial so people should be, I think, will need to be fluent across disciplines. They don't need to be experts in every discipline but understanding the language and customs and culture of different disciplines will be important. And so basically we need the training and also we need to culture with NMFS to foster this sort of interdisciplinary work. And then we also need some interdisciplinary people so I don't think everybody needs to be interdisciplinary person, in fact it's probably better if they are not so that they are subject matter experts. But we still need people that are able to cross disciplines and serve as boundary spanners within sort of the network of various expertise set in an institution. I forget what the question is but I hope that, I mean to me the future and how we get to the future is about training people especially young people who are coming into the field so that one, they are fluent across disciplines and two, there are some small number of people who are actually expert at crossing disciplines.

MA: Yeah, and what role have you seen technology…how has technology evolved since you have been here and how do you see that affecting the field as well?

PL: When I first started there were no electric cars. So now people who have electric cars have very good parking spaces. [laughter]

MA: Yeah, makes it easier [laughter]

PL: Technology has not been huge in our field, in this field. I would say the exception to that is about ten years ago there was an emergence of a kind of modeling approach called end to end modeling. That means it goes from basically the oceanography through people, so end to end of the whole ecosystem. That approach emerged about a decade ago. The models are extremely complex and require significant computing power to run and the emergence of those models has in some instances changed the conversation around fisheries. Although even now technology limits the use of this type of model as an actual management tool. It's things are still too slow because the models are too complex. Whereas some fishery models take seconds or minutes to run, these kind of models might take eight hours to do a single run. Because the fisheries review process or fisheries model review process requires lots of iteration and examination and sensitivity analysis and the like. It's just not practical to do it. While the technology has allowed us to build the models, it's not yet to the point where we can actually use them for practical tactical management. But it will get there.

MA: Yeah, you think that management and policy will eventually adapt to those changes?

PL: When the technology improves so that these models are running at a speed that is sort of more like a real time speed where a manager could look at the results and ask questions and make suggestions and then the modeler can implement those which is kind of what happens with stock system models. Once we get to that point then I think yeah, you will start seeing those models get taken up.

MA: And what about the office environment itself, how have you noticed that's changed since you have been here?

PL: The office environment, well, one of the great things about working in the Northwest Center is that space is at a premium. Just sounds negative. It's very crowded but what that means is that it always felt like I was in grad school. I was always sharing an office and as a result I got to know people better than I would have otherwise certainly better than if I was at a university where professors form little kingdoms. So there is a real and continues to be a real esprit de corp… um…people really bond and work together as a team in a way that doesn't happen most places. I think that's largely a function of the physical layout of the center and the degree to which it was crowded. But then in 2008, we had the sequester which then led later, well it wasn't 2008….2008 was the depression, no, the recession and then a couple years later, we had the sequester. Then we started seeing people especially term employees not getting renewed and retirements not getting replaced and so the center shrunk quite a bit. In terms of actual changes, I think we lost over seventy people at the center so something like twenty or thirty percent of the staff left within a year. So what that means is now space is not of a premium but still by and large people are sharing offices. I think that for some people that might be an issue but by and large, it's been a really positive thing for a lot of people.

MA: And a lot of people say, you know, since the '90s, the '80, more women have come in, more diversity. Have you seen that too in the office? Just more people from different backgrounds?

PL: Well, yeah, I think, it's hard to say if there's more. I think when I came here, there is noticeably more women in higher levels or similar levels to academia. I think largely because it's a very family friendly workplace. So I know when say I had problems with a kid, for example, that it's no big deal. Everybody understands and support you and so your productivity might decline for a short period of time but in a sense the institution is repaid because you become…um…you develop a connection to and support for the center. So you stick around maybe longer than you would have. It's a lot like a very family friendly environment. I would still say though, gender wise we are okay. On other aspects of diversity, we are terrible. Unless the agency does something to actively change that, it's going to remain terrible. Around this area, for example, I mean it's almost shocking that in an area where we have so many treaty tribes that play a fundamental role, we have Northwest Indian College, we have lots of resources in this area, we have virtually, as far as I know, no Native Americans on our staff even let alone other minority groups. We do okay with gender, we could do better with gender. Right now we don't have any, well, we have one division director who is female. The center leadership, the science director, deputy director, all my directors, and three of the four science directors are male, white men, all white men.

MA: Yeah, on the note of treaties and tribal rights, I know…I remember you talked a lot and I've read about your trip to Haida Gwaii right? You said you felt like you learned things there and gained some knowledge about conservation, community based conservation? Is that right? Was that trip like eye opening in any way?

PL: Yeah, it was eye opening.

MA: Yeah, how was that?

PL: This was 2012 or so, I had an opportunity to be loaned to the Canadian Government, so there's some program that allows this sort of exchange of staff. I worked out of a Parks Canada office in the village of Skidegate, British Columbia which is in the Haida Gwaii archipelago which is 100 kilometers off the coast of Northern British Columbia. I lived for most of that time in a house in a Haida village and my kids went to a Haida school so I was imbedded in the community for quite some time and I think the main thing I learned and really came to appreciate is the degree to which in many cases our western ideas of conservation, by western I mean white, rich, are just another form of colonialism. We are imposing our values and culture on another community and in doing so sometimes you have the opposite effect that you would want. I am not, I know my time there had a profound effect on me. I mean, it launched me into doing a lot

more social science myself or at least with others in close collaboration than I did otherwise. I think I became, I mean it could be that the most important thing wass that I realized that also, not only the role of colonialism or colonial attitudes today but also the historical legacy of colonialism.

In Haida Gwaii, you can't talk about conservation and fisheries today without addressing what's happened over the last two hundred years there. An example of that is I was recently working on some things up there maybe three months ago. I went to observe and then participate in an elders recording session. There is only twenty native speakers in the Haida language and so they are trying to preserve the language or at least document the language. It's hilarious, it's like going to a convention of your grandmothers and they are so funny and nice. I was there to help stimulate stories both in English and in their native language about herring. It took less than ten minutes before nobody was talking about fish. They were still talking about herring but it was about first how abundant the fish were. Then how much fun it was to get the fish and how important the fish was to social interactions. That took about ten minutes and then for three hours they talked about in Canada something called the Indian Act and the consequences of the Indian Act for them and how they couldn't participate in any of the fisheries, the traditional fisheries because it was illegal and the long effect that had on them, even today you can see sort of this almost, it was traumatic for them not to be able to do something that was so valuable. So, they were all Haida but they married white men and in doing so they were by the government, Canadian government, considered not Haida therefore they had none of the rights that would be afforded to Haida members or Haida people. They couldn't do anything traditional anymore just because they were married to a white guy. And the other thing was if it was reversed gender wise, so if a Haida male married a white woman, he was still Haida. So there was both this racist anti-indigenous part to it but also sexist. What was interesting to me, though, was that you could raise…the fisheries is just one place where you would see how there was this institutional racism and how it played out in the culture but it could have been, you could say the same thing about forestry as well or any of the traditional activities.

MA: Yeah, and then you came back here after you were finished? After you did your time there?

PL: Yeah.

MA: Did you try to incorporate what had learned there into your work here at all?

PL: No, I just ignored it all...no I, yeah... I started one project which is called Ocean's Tipping Point Project where the point of that was to really look at the degree to which there are thresholds in our biophysical world that might be caused by climate change or fishing or whatever and how that translates into potentially cultural tipping points. In the case of the Haida but many other people there is real long term consequences for the loss of a natural resource. The

question is where is that tipping point and how do we avoid that? So that was a big project that emerged from that and that has been focused. We were working with the Haida Gwaii still but also has included up in West Coast and also working with the National Marine Sanctuary Program especially in Hawaii on their humpback whale sanctuary.

The other thing I started realizing is that native peoples generally feel disenfranchised and not listened to by government whether it's in the U.S. or Canada. Part of that has to do with their traditional knowledge and also well, we started another project called the Ocean Model Forum. The idea there is to bring in native peoples, managers, fisheries modelers, ecologists together and co-create models that could be used in management. They incorporate the expertise of the native peoples as well as, sort of the, …well, in a language I would say that is familiar to management. Translate traditional knowledge into the language of fisheries basically. That's so far been really successful. We are working both in Canada and in the U.S. with that. The idea is that we have these meetings and that we have elders and chiefs come and we work with them trying to get their knowledge translated to a form modelers can use and then other part of it is we go back into the communities as well and then reach out to the broader community. We are mostly working with Tlingit in Alaska and Haida in Canada.

MA: So now just wondering if anyone is listening to this wants to have your job some day and follow your career, what would be the day to day life, the day to day job, for you when you first started out vs. where you are now in terms of? You get in and what are various things that you do?

PL: Well, from 1988 when I started grad school until I got here, I would spend, especially in the summers, six days out in the boat or diving. That's what I did maybe 12 hours a day in the summer. Just collecting data as fast as I could. I would have all sorts of experiments for whatever I was doing and then I would do that other times of year too but it was very intense in the summer because there was no classes to take or teaching to do when I was a professor. The academic year part of it was about analyzing the data I collected, organizing it all to try to write it up to document the results and so forth.

When I came here, there is a separation between data collection and data analysis by and large. Because I could analyze data quickly and write it up quickly, I became one who was less involved in the collection of data and more involved with analysis. Some people quite liked that. I would say the majority of people here don't spend a lot of time in the field but do spend a lot of time analyzing data. It's always a struggle to find time so you can go out in the field usually you are in this business because you like the animals and not the computer. So I did that until fairly recently and then as I acquired or was forced to have more administrative responsibilities now I feel like my tagline is "saving the ocean one conference call at a time". There is a lot more meetings about how to use all the information we have collected and analyzed. In a way it is

satisfying because I am in more of a position to create change but it's not quite as much fun as actually doing all the field work. That's just one reason I'm going back to a university so I am doing more field work but also by working with the Nature Conservancy, I'll also be in a position to enact that change.

MA: So what's your number one take away point or advice you have for the same kind of person who would be interested in your career?

PL: Number one advice, I think the thing I think is most important for the a scientist especially at NOAA who wants to be an applied scientist who wants to be involved with conservation of our oceans, the problems are endless. There is no shortage of things to do. There is a lot of different topics and there is a lot of people to do the work with. I think if you want to be successful you should have fun. So pick the topics you are most interested in and you most will enjoy and pick people to work with who you want to work with because if you have fun every day when you come to work you will be successful. If you don't, you'll be miserable and you probably won't do as good of work as you would otherwise.

MA: That's good advice.

PL: If you're not having fun, figure out how to have fun,

MA: You're doing it wrong, yeah. Anything else you want to end on or talk about your life, or any other things that you just want to bring up? I don't have any more questions.

PL: No, are there other things that other people have talked about that I have skipped?

MA: No, you pretty much covered it. Maybe what are your plans after you retire, when do you plan on maybe retiring or finishing at University of Washington? What do you see yourself doing after that?

PL: Okay, I don't know, it's funny. There was a guy here recently who just said, who is older than me, retirement age, and he was telling a story. He said his wife said, "when are you going to retire? His response was, "I can't retire there is too much work to do". I don't know if I will ever like be totally retired. I, because I enjoy doing what I do. I have another friend who recently retired. His comment was, " I have retired from doing the things that I don't like doing". By saying he is retired, it just gave him permission to just say no to all the crap that he would have to do if someone's paying you. He is still actively involved in research but it's the research that he is the most interested in, the most excited about and feels is the most important. He does it because it's fun. I imagine I'll do some of that and live on my hobby farm and have goats and alpacas.

MA: Do you currently live on a hobby farm or is that just your…?

PL: I own one and as soon as I get rid of my kids and they go off to college I will be less tied to the city.

MA: Where is your hobby farm located?

PL: Sultan. Northeast of Seattle.

MA: And when do your kids go off to college?

PL: Well, thirteen months if one was counting. They are about to enter their senior year.

MA: Senior year. That's exciting.

PL: Yeah, for them and I have twins so I am going to be having two teenagers to zero in one year.

MA: Wow. Two girls?

PL: Boy, Girl.

MA: Boy, Girl, wow. So at least you have a mix, different problems...

P: Yes, my wife said basically instant family, just add milk.

MA: Yeah, twins, I can't imagine. Two just suddenly appearing in your life. Well, thank you.