

Frank Taylor: We are at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution for our session with Dr. John Stegeman regarding his life and his oral history. I might add, he is just back from the University of (Johannesburg?)...

John Stegeman: Johannesburg in English, [foreign language] in Swedish.

FT: ...where he was awarded an honorary doctorate in his field. A session or two ago I was thinking about this. I had asked a question dealing with writing, and sometimes I will ask the question in such a way that perhaps the answer could be considered to be either controversial or something that would make people unhappy. That's my fault, and I apologize for that. I would still like an answer to that particular question, however, which dealt with this whole issue of what's important for a young person or anyone going into the field of oceanography. Obviously, they have to know in great depth and detail their particular discipline because of the way things work in the field of oceanography. They also have to know quite a bit about other people's disciplines, too, because we look at things in terms of environments here. But I had made the statement that I tell young people that English is very important because they have to be able to write and they have to be able to sell themselves and they have to be able to explain in a reasonable manner to people what it is they are doing. So, I had asked you about the importance of writing.

JS: Writing is – and I had answered – critically important for success in science, I think. Because it's the one way of communicating that is – well it used to be considered permanent. I'm not sure how permanent it is anymore with the electronic library and things that can disappear. It is also the place where your thinking is revealed, and it is critical that your writing reveal a clarity of thought in the questions posed in the writing, in the approach to those questions, and in the interpretation of results. The interpretation of results is usually at the end of a paper in a discussion section, and it should be tied to the beginning, to the question. So, if the questions are not clearly framed, and if the reasons for doing the study are not clearly articulated and well thought out – it's not just clearly articulated, but having that word on paper reveal the clarity of thought. That they're well thought out questions. Then, the interpretation and how you write the interpretations and conclusions becomes easier and more straightforward. But in both cases, I think, there is one element that sometimes is missing in writing of people as they are maturing in the science. That is the ability to read what they had written carefully and clearly. So, sometimes you see manuscripts from whomever that if you read them yourself you go through the introduction of the paper or the discussion of the paper and you see glaring omissions in what they have used as the framework for why the question that they're asking is important or in how they are interpreting the results. I don't know whether it can be taught, but I hope it can. We've tried. It requires the ability to go in. It requires the effort, I should say, to go into what you've written so carefully and try to put yourself in someone else's mind while you're reading this so that you can see whether there is a logical flaw, whether an interpretation includes an assumption that hasn't been tested, or whether there's something missing. Frankly, with today's literature searching on the Internet through pub Med, which is part of the NIH business, or with the – break. So, it is that ability to read and with the – and I said that there are often things that are omitted. This is where having a breadth of thinking and a breadth of knowledge is really important because without it you can write things that sound very good and that sound really wonderful, but you may be missing a big piece. So, therefore, the conclusions can be

misleading, particularly, to someone who is not themselves, sufficiently well-versed, to be able to see when there's something missing. So, I think, care in writing and being able to bring in all of the bits, all of the connections, the threads that are important to an interpretation is so vitally important to the progress of science.

FT: As a mentor, is this something you worked with students on?

JS: You try to. Yes, you do. As I said in an earlier conversation that I had, articles on writing, scientific writing, and these kinds of things, are very important for people to read. Then there are others. There are some who come into the lab or with whom you come into contact who write beautifully and have the breadth of knowledge to be able to frame the question and to really pose the question in a way that you understand why it's important, how it should be addressed, and why it should be addressed. The interpretations are informative and thought-provoking.

FT: What initially led me to ask that question was that, I think, a lot of people would not know that it is not just a case of responding to you as a mentor in terms of how do you do your research and how do you report on it. But even when you are an established person in the field, your writing is going to be out there. When they are determining how successful you are, they are going to call in from other people that have read your material, and it is really necessary that they understand what you said and that it does in fact contribute to that particular field.

JS: Right. Absolutely.

FT: Which is as far as I am concerned is one of the things that makes working here really Major League because the requirements are pretty stiff.

JS: Right.

FT: Okay, okay. I just wanted to make sure we have that in there. Now, over the course of these interviews, we've covered everything from your early years to the research that you have done, the working with students, covered your organizational abilities in terms of chairmanships of departments, and things of this nature. It was interesting to me this morning when I parked my car. I went in and talked to a young woman who publishes the weekly goings on at the Oceanographic. She asked me where I was going. I said, "Well, I am going to have another session with Dr. John Stegeman." She said, "I just found out that he was retired. I had absolutely no idea he was retired." Because you are still here all the time, and, you are, in fact. I would like to talk about that some. You have retired but you are still here. You are still going on strong. I would like to know why and what the future is going to hold. What you are aiming at. Those kinds of things.

JS: The why was with reference to what?

FT: Why retire?

JS: Well, at a place like this, there can be a number of reasons for retiring and not necessarily having to do with work or effort, but other things. Sometimes one might think, "Well, if I don't

have the strict adherence to some daily activity that's imposed on me, then I'm free to do more of what I want without having to be concerned about accounting for my hours on a timecard." That's a mental thing in both cases. I mean, there's a mental adherence to the timecard and accounting for the hours. Retiring, I can say, did bring a sense of mental relaxation. There was a freedom that came that I hadn't really anticipated. There was a sense of relaxation. I wasn't working any less, wasn't doing any less. Well, I was getting up a little later each day. [laughter] About thirty minutes to it. I used to get up at 5:30, now I get up a quarter to seven. So, I used to be in the office at between 7:00 and 7:30. Now, I'm in the office between 8:30 and a quarter to nine. So, maybe that's a big thing. I don't know. Maybe it is. But, that's all kind of kind of mental relaxation that comes. But why retire? That's not really sufficient reason in itself to retire. At a place like (Hooey?) there are financial issues that, also, are very important that can influence decisions about retirement or not. Can influence the financial picture of the institution, the financial picture of a person's laboratory. There were aspects of that in my case as well. I was and still am fully funded by the NIH. Assuming that the grant noncompetitive renewal requests, which you have to put in annually to get the next year's money, are honored, and assuming we make sufficient progress, and the lab is still fully funded for a little more than the next three years. So, I could have stayed on the payroll as a full-time, or even half-time, employee and been able to make it fine. If I were full-time, the amount of money that would be required to pay my salary and the overhead attached to it would have consumed a major part of the grant funds that I have. Because of the way that biochemistry and molecular biology works, it would have meant that there would not have been as many people working in the lab producing results along the lines of the experiments that have been proposed to justify having the grants. So, by my retiring, it freed up funds that could be used to make sure that the work progressed in a way that would be consistent with meeting the objectives of the grants. I could justify in my own mind having those grants, whereas if it was a struggle to get the work done – since you reach a certain point at which you do not do the work yourself. Some people still do when they reach their seniority, if you will, most don't. Not in biochemistry and molecular biology. They have cadres of the students and postdocs and technicians who do the work. So, that was one real issue that prompted me to retire. In so doing, the financial picture of the institution also improved because I was able to use some of the funds that were now free for my salary, to hire others in the department who were having some grant difficulties at that time. So, it gave them a support for a period of time. Easing their anxieties as well as providing effort to meeting the objectives of the grants and also reducing the somewhat bridge support that was required for certain people in the department. So that people, a staff member, didn't have to ask for institution resources to pay his salary. Plus, when I stepped down from being chair, there was an amount of money that had been accumulated during the period that I was chair. You get a certain amount banked called step down funds. The step-down funds were – I had used a lot of the step down funds. But I decided that I would take this step for the grant purposes. But in so doing, I was able to give back to the institution some of these step down funds, so that was also a benefit to the institution. So, this allows me to work as hard as I want, we still have the grants, I still have responsibility for the grants. So, I'm here making sure the work gets done, trying to keep things on track, and doing writing and whatnot as I always had been doing. Still serving as Director of the Center for Oceans and Human Health. I'm volunteering my time, so the amount of time that I'm devoting is pretty much what I used to. Actually, it's probably less. It's probably more around forty hours a week, whereas it used to be fifty to sixty before I had retired. There's this little thing in the back of my mind. Everyone wastes time, and over the years I've wasted a

fair amount of time. So, here I am able to devote my effort to the objectives of the grants and do so by donating my time, making up for time that I may have wasted in the past.

FT: I always sit here – I am kind of amazed. I find there are some things that are pretty general around the institution when I asked that kind of question. I am always amazed at the passion for the research, and to me, that is a very operative word around here. That it is not a job, it is a passion. Along with that, there is also the maintenance of a lifestyle way of doing things that enters into this. It is almost as though you said to me, "I have retired to free myself up so I can really get on with this and not feel some of the other restraints," and things like that.

JS: Well, I think, in a way, that is a way to say that, yes.

FT: Oh, okay. I find that very admirable. I find that something that does go on in this institution and ask a lot of people that. Well, okay.

JS: So, as far as the future is concerned, I mean, I am here full time. The grants are enforced, I have the lab, I'm going to try to see whether I will be involved in writing another grant application for submission two years down the road that would provide another five years of funding. But, by that time I would be seventy if I got another five-year grant and stayed on to oversee that. I would be seventy by the time that ended. I'm not sure that I will – I'm not sure how long this is going to go on. Now, some people say when they look at me, they say, "Well, you'll never step out or step aside because it's not in you." I'm not sure that's true. I don't know that it's not, but I'm not sure that it is.

We talked about my wife wanting to move to Colorado, and so there may be that. Although with family and grandchildren now here, that certainly may change. But the period of a couple of years before I did actually make the, let's say financial decision rather than work, decision to retire, I had thought about what I would do, what I would like to do, things that I haven't done. I had been attracted to a number of volunteer kinds of things, and we'll have volunteering now. But, working with Habitat for Humanity was one thing that had appealed to me, and I did explore that. At the time I did, there they weren't looking for people to pound nails around this part of the caper, and I thought, "Well if they're building a house, I want to go help build a house." I think they're probably doing that now, but I'm not sure whether I will do that. I don't know what I will do. I mean, I'm here. If it were to be something that really fires me up, then I might do some other kinds of activities. But I don't really know. I'd like to have played golf more, I played once this summer. Just couldn't find the time. But in thinking back, though, whenever I sit down and go through the papers, and I mean by reprints and my own notes and papers that are in piles all around the office, and I go through them, I'm frequently reminded of objectives that I had that haven't been met. So, there are a number of things that I would really like to see accomplished in the science. Things that I had wanted to do. I have achieved some of them. In the science itself, I would like very much to understand how the protein structures of the enzymes that we work with have adapted to function in the deep sea. So, it's a matter of cloning and it's a matter of getting those genes out of deep sea fishes and using them to produce the proteins and see how they operate under pressure or not. There are physical biochemical reasons for wanting to do this. I mean, it has been studied with a couple of other proteins already, but not with proteins that are embedded in a lipophilic environment where that is highly

susceptible to influence by pressure. So, there is that kind of thing that I would like very much to pursue. I have wanted to be able to provide some platform for improving the science in this area and in other places in South America. I have at this most recent year and a half ago meeting in Florianopolis, a city in the South of Brazil. This is the meeting series that I've had a strong influence in where it goes and wanted it to go to South America so that it could serve as a focal point for people to come and learn about this science and make contacts that could help. So, that there have been contacts that I've made with people in Peru, and in Chile, and Brazil. In fact, I have three Brazilians in the lab right now that I would like to somehow be able to enhance that. Certainly, in Africa, there is a crying need. I have some colleagues in Europe who are doing this kind of thing in Africa that I would like to somehow contribute. In the end, I suspect that I won't get very far from the lab. As long as there's funding then the lab will keep cooking. When the funding stops, then it will be up to me to do the writing. To clean off the desk for the last time, which would not an inconsiderate amount of effort. I think it could easily take a year to effectively go through it and be discriminating about what things you throw and what things you keep. Then, what do you do with the things that you keep? That's always the question.  
[laughter]

FT: It brings up a question, though. It would seem to me that over the course of a career you spent an awful lot of time developing a whole environment here around your specialty. Bringing young people in, getting them involved, mentoring them, working with colleagues. Would not one of the goals – you talked about finishing up, writing everything up. I am just asking this as a question. Would not one of the goals be to keep this laboratory going?

JS: Oh, absolutely. Yes. You mean after I should leave, if I should leave?

FT: Yes. How would you take a part in getting it to the point where it is going to keep going and it is going to be someone in charge who shares your kind of passion and ways of doing things?

JS: Right. So, there is a group that is larger than just my lab. Well, it's principally two. Well, now with the third. But Mark Hahn and myself. Mark being postdoc – someone who had been a postdoc with me – who's found his staff. The kinds of things that go on in Mark's lab are very much aligned with what goes on in my lab. If I were to decide that I did not want to pursue, didn't want to come in every day, and didn't want to be in charge of these grants, I could petition the NIH to transfer the grants to Mark. If he were willing, that would be one way. Another way is to bring somebody into the lab who can grow to the point at which they will be able to basically take over what's going on. So, looking toward the future, there is another person in the lab who is developing the thought capability and becoming the independent in how they are pursuing things to a degree that this person could step in and oversee much. But not yet. So, yes, it's very much on my mind. It is a question about whether that – with a place like this Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution – there is not a requirement that certain disciplines be maintained. The scope and nature of work in this department has changed over the years. For example, there had been a very large effort thirty years ago in salt marsh ecology, and today there is none. So, it often is the case that directions of research in the department change as people come and go. With Mark here, the overall direction and the subdiscipline, if you will, that I operate in would be represented because that that's what Mark does also. Not necessarily

the same things – he looks at different genes of different proteins – but with very similar overall objectives, large objectives. Understanding how chemicals interact with living systems. So, that part of it would continue if I were to decide I wanted to spend my time on the beach and in Fort Lauderdale or whatever. The lab itself, I would – there are questions related to these particular proteins and genes, and understanding how organisms adapt to their environment. Gene environment interactions and all kinds of organisms. I think it's something that is a valuable thing to have here. In part because it pertains to the health of the oceans, and I think that is something that this institution needs to have within its scope of activities. I think it's a benefit to the institution. I think it is a benefit to the institution, in part, because this is something that people are concerned with. That the common layman non–scientist is concerned with. How are the oceans doing? What's wrong? Are we contaminating? What kind of effects are going on in the oceans? So, this is, I think, something that should have a home at this institution. Should I depart, it will. Should I depart and find someone to take over grants assuming the grants are still enforced. Or to take over the lab. Then that lab, my lab, will continue to have a role in addressing those questions. I think that would be nice.

FT: But it is an interesting area because you brought up some interesting points here. There are some I have heard before in doing oral histories with past and, well, now all past directors of the institution. They have talked about one of the issues that they have to deal with is trying to develop certain kinds of departments and get those into a world class situation and perhaps starting to phase out some other kinds of departments that perhaps are not as much call as they used to be or it had reached their potential. So, for someone like yourself that almost means you have got to be able to look into the future a little bit and see where you think things are going to go, and how they are going to develop, and what the interest is. You talked about having people, the lay person, involved. I remember very much, a few years ago now, all the medical waste washing up on the beaches in Rhode Island and things like that, and that got a lot of press. Things that people were concerned about. We routinely see in papers now when a beach area is going to be closed down for one reason or another. This may be a very unfair question, so feel free to say "Hey, I am not even going to touch that." If, as you look to the future, still being very much involved had complete autonomies – like you are the director of the institution – how would you take this? Where would you go with the kinds of research that you see that perhaps you feel is needed, but not being addressed? Or areas like – am I incorrect in saying more information of the layman? Some kind of thing where the institution educates.

JS: Well, when I referred to the layman, I was just thinking about what the average man on the street is concerned with. The questions that you're asking are ones of great importance for the institution. [laughter] Susan Avery, I'm sure has very good ideas about this.

FT: [laughter] So, you are telling me you are not going to touch that one with a ten–foot pole. Let me tell you the reason I asked that. Years and years of teaching, it has always been very interesting to me that for some of the criticism teachers take, a lot of it, I think, is based on lack of information. As an example, a teacher may be right up to absolute snuff on teaching the use of slide rule, and the kids come out of that person's class really understanding how to use this tool. But, in a research institution like this you, have passed the slide rule stage and you are in the computer stage, but the teacher does not have that information yet to bring themselves up to where they should be and pass along information that is current. So, I guess, what I was asking

on that was, "Do you see a greater role in the kind of work you do, as an example, of communicating with the general public?"

JS: Oh, sure, I think it's very important that that be done. In fact, it's required by the funding agencies that you show some broader impact.

FT: But that has only been relatively recent, though, has not it?

JS: The requirements to do so?

FT: Yes.

JS: Yes. Ten years.

FT: Yes. Or more.

JS: Yes, little more, but, yes. Well, I think your background as a teacher is really in part perhaps driving the question that you're asking.

FT: Oh, absolutely.

JS: Right. So, is there a way in which to enhance the educational process in the sciences by contributing something from us, this institution, to secondary or even primary school education efforts? Absolutely there is. It is difficult to do it in a large effort because being driven by grants, the institution, being supported by grants, the institution's staff has requirements to meet the objectives of the grants. It's a research institution, it's not an educational institution, except at the graduate level. But, yet, most people I know are always enthusiastic about opportunities to contribute to secondary or primary educational efforts. So, in my lab, and I know in Mark's lab, and in other labs in the department, we have had secondary school teachers come in and spend the summer doing research, doing some of the molecular stuff that we do. We've had, on occasion, high school students come in and do, within a few weeks of training due at the bench, the molecular biology that the graduate students are up there doing right now. A lot of what is done, in molecular biology as an example, is possible to learn how to do and produce reliable data for someone who's a sophomore, junior, senior, in high school. Certainly an undergraduate. Depends upon their interest and their drive to learn. There, then, is the difficult thing about, "Well, why are we doing this?" "Okay, so we're looking at all of these fish livers and we're looking at these fish embryos and this and this gene y that's going up or down in the level of expression." "Well, why are we doing this?" That's a more difficult aspect to the educational process is to get the student, usually not the teacher, but the student, to begin to think about why one would want to know these kinds of things, why one would want to do this, to begin to connect what they're doing at the bench with questions and the fact that we don't know everything. There was a period when – and I think you can correct me as a teacher – in the maturation of student's questioning of nature through the educational process. I think there is a long phase in which they are assuming that what they are doing has been done or at least someone knows the answer.

FT: Absolutely.

JS: So, getting them to recognize that doing things in the laboratory, a laboratory exercise if you will, is to learn new things for which answers are not yet known is a big hurdle. So, that's what I mean. Getting them over that hurdle of understanding why we're doing particular things in the laboratory. But, yes, sure. We have had interactions with undergraduates, with high school students, high school student teachers, and in the laboratory. They've always been wonderful.

FT: Well, a couple of things of interest I – when I used to assign laboratory projects, I never graded the youngsters on the answer they came up with. I graded mostly on the procedure.

JS: Sure.

FT: I wanted to know what their thinking process was. Because there are a lot of ways of answering a question. Some are more efficient than others, but there are a lot of ways of coming to a conclusion. That is just an aside. The other aside was that about ten years ago now, the National Science Teachers of America's Convention was in Boston. One of the field trips that was offered was to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. They asked me if I would, as an ex-teacher, help bring some of the people to the institution, conductor, that sort of thing. I think the thing that really struck me about the level of interest was that the tour with the bus sold out very, very quickly. So, there were at least a dozen other people that went and hired cars and followed the bus out so that they could be part of this whole thing. Kind of a general thing was trying to put something in mind here of as you describe how you want this department to continue on, how you operate with it, and all that. If there were some other areas, perhaps, that might be of interest, dealing with educators being one of them. I think you have answered that.

JS: Yes, so if that were to be an activity for the future I don't know. Perhaps, unfortunately, I am still at the stage of wanting to know what happens next at the bench with my own hands. But I'll go upstairs and ask them, "Well, how's it going? What have you found?" I'm still, I guess, too much tied up. Maybe it's a sign of a weak mind that you just can't get out of the rut, but I'm still wanting to know the answer to the next question at the bench.

FT: I don't think that is ever going to leave you. I use the word passion. I can relate from my own experience. When it came time for me to retire, I delayed it for three years because I really felt I needed to have a plan of some kind. I could not just say, "That is it. I'm done. Okay, fellas, what is next?" You know?

JS: Right. Well, there is a benefit to being in this kind of a business because it's not retirement like many in industry or business or whatever, if they retire. I suppose a group of retired executives – I'm not sure what they call it – who provide advice and who you can call and they stay involved in that way. I think a lot of people at some level do continue with the activities that are very much like what they had done before. But, in this particular environment, and at this institution, and in this kind of a field, that is a science field. Well, you can retire, but it's just a point in time that doesn't change anything except where your paycheck comes from. So, that difficulty of accommodating to a new style and activity that some people would experience with retirement, well we don't. It's not a problem of "Well, what am I going to do tomorrow?" It's not

a problem of having the wife say, "Well, why don't you go out and find something to do?" [laughter].

FT: This is the first big strain on a marriage of forty plus years. When you are around all the time. Well, in the course of this oral history, is there anything I should have asked you or anything I failed to ask you that you think was important? That should be included in this?

JS: No, I don't think so. I don't think so. I can't think of anything right now, but I will certainly let you know if I do. However, I would say that having this be two days after the election that I think – there is a comment about this election, perhaps, that is pertinent. That is how this institution and how people here have contributed to the educational activities and efforts at minority and undergraduate institutions. I was struck over the years by the interactions that the institution has had with minority institutions. Just being an American and living, I think, that this most recent election will have an enormous influence on educational success in minority institutions because of the extraordinary value of the president–elect as a role model in a way that has never been possible before. I think it will change people's perspectives and views of themselves and society as a whole. I think to great, great advantage. So, with that, what I would say is that one of the difficulties we have had over the years is finding a suitable group of minority scientists with interests in oceanography and ocean sciences to be able to contribute to the diversity within this field. I think that will change for all fields. May take a few years, but I think this election will have a strong influence on a group of people who will be doing science in this area in other areas in the future.

FT: I am not even going to comment, I am just going to stop it there. I did not ask. Dr. Stegeman, I asked to turn the tape recorder back on because this is one thing that I should have asked, and I did not ask, and I know my wife is going to badger me when I get home. It is a two–part question. When I say my wife is going to badger me because she is a former school librarian and she always asks me, "What does he read for entertainment?" I would like to take and do that and also put together what else what do you do for entertainment? Because I do not want this to end up being something "Well, this guy spends twenty–three point five hours a day in the laboratories. He has got no life." [laughter].

JS: Well, as we talked about that is life. Yes, well what I read. Now, that's tough. I don't read as many novels as I used to, or non–science books, so I'm trying to think what the last book I read was. I think it was probably a series of very short vignettes about growing up written by a friend of mine from high school. About growing up in Quincy, IL. It's called Fresh Earthworms Taste Green, or something like that. [laughter].

FT: A little protein there.

JS: Yes. Well, so reading. Yes, I have tended, over the past twenty–five years or so now, to focus reading on science. I hate to tell you. I like mystery novels and science mystery novels and things like the Andromeda strain and things like that were popular with me. Yes, okay. So, medical detective novels I read. Like the ones by Michael Palmer and Patricia Cornwell.

FT: Yes.

JS: So, those kinds of things. Since I read all of Agatha Christie twice, I just can't go back there again.

FT: So, with the people that are mystery novel enthusiasts, I find there is a very specific category. You read them because you like the kind of occupation the person's in, or you like the area that the mysteries take place in. Those seem to be two things that are absolutely standard with mystery people, and I certainly fall into that category.

JS: When you say area, do you mean geographic area?

FT: Yes. For example, one of my favorites is find about a bar a National Park Ranger named Anna Pigeon. I like the occupation, but she is also – one mystery will be in Mesa Verde National Park, another mystery will be in the Grand Canyon, and another, you know.

JS: Right. So, there was a man who died recently, an author who died recently, who wrote about the southwest. I used to read his, too.

FT: Tony Hillerman.

JS: Tony Hillerman, that's right.

FT: With Jim Chi and...

JS: Yes, those. So, those are the things that I have tended to read. Those are the ones that I will pick up and read and enjoy reading from beginning to end. As far as other things, I just mentioned to you that I sing and I thought that I had talked about it before, but I started singing –

FT: We did talk about it.

JS: – in high school and Glee Club. I said I mentioned that I sang, I think.

FT: It is not coming back, so it is okay to say it again.

JS: Then, when we moved here, I started singing with a choral group called the Falmouth Interfaith Choir, which did major choral works, and that group still exists. It's in its fortieth year, I guess. It's called the Falmouth Coral. So, I sang with them for about twenty years and then stopped. Then I sang at weddings. Not many, a few. But my sister's wedding I sang at. My nephew's wedding and a couple of others. Probably a half a dozen others. There was an organist who would call me to sing weddings at Saint Anthony's church. I then sang with the mostly all male men's chorus in Falmouth for about five years and then stopped for about five years. Then went back last year singing with a group called Master Singers by the Sea. Master Singers does a variety of things, but major works as well as light effort. A group called Schola Cantorum of Falmouth which does acapella renaissance music. That's a group of about sixteen. Should be single voice kind of sound and it can be just glorious.

FT: Acapella is tough, I think. That is a hard one, I think, because you are the whole show. [laughter] There is no way you can hide.

JS: Oh, I don't mind doing solo work. I mean, the difficulty of singing acapella when you are one soloist with other voices. If you've got a base tenor duet or two solely, that's difficult because my sense of timing is difficult. I'm fine if I can follow my own time, but if I have to meet the tempo that somebody else is following as well and be in sync, I find that tough. But, with the group it's great. I also now sing again with the Falmouth Coral, too. So, I'm doing three of them.

FT: You also golf?

JS: Not very much. Once this year. Only once. But I do take Italian lessons, too. I study Italian.

FT: Really?

JS: Yes. [speaks Italian].

FT: When you say you take lessons, is this with something like...

JS: It's the Falmouth Night School. Mariana Averbach. She's a famous person in town for anyone who's ever studied Italian because they've studied it with her, and hundreds have over the years.

FT: I asked because it is one I have considered.

JS: Oh, really? Well, it's great fun. You should do it.

FT: Yes, yes. Yes, it's really something that I've thought about that I might like. The fact my wife and I have been talking about doing it together kind of thing so that we could –

JS: Oh, you should. At home having two together to practice with. I mean, that would be terrific, but, now where do you live?

FT: In Framingham.

JS: In Framingham. Well, people drive from Harwich and Brewster and Wareham to study Italian with Mariana.

FT: Okay, great.

[end of transcript]