



ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

**An interview with
Jack Prodanovich, 1913-2008
&
Wallis (Wally) L. Potts 1918-2002
August 29, 1983**

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PREFACE

This interview introduces two of the original members of an early local diving group which was known as the "Bottom Scratchers." There were three original members of this group and two of those three members participated in this interview. These members are Jack Prodanovich and Wally Potts. The latter member, Wally Potts, added to the history of the club's beginning in a separate interview completed ten years later (September 1993).

The "Bottom Scratchers" have an important place in San Diego history because they were the first local skin diving organization. As a group they set high standards that probably have not been surpassed. They also developed many of the diving aids such as underwater cameras, eye goggles, and many others. Their record of sportsmanship, inventiveness, and initiative should be known and appreciated by all San Diegans.

INTERVIEWER'S NOTE

I am sitting here in the home of Jack Prodanovich, one of the founders of the Bottom Scratchers Diving Club here in San Diego, Point Loma, and his friend, Wallis (Wally) Potts. We are going to have a three-way interview of some of the days of the early history of diving in San Diego. My name is Craig Carter, and the date is August 29, 1983.

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

I am using the designation of P/P for narrator /respondent as it is difficult to distinguish between the voices of Prodanovich and Potts in this transcription.

JACK PRODANOVICH: Let's explain to Wally just what is going on.

CRAIG CARTER: The San Diego Historical Society interviews people like yourselves who have been a part of San Diego history. Then the tape is transcribed and the transcription and the tape go into the files of the San Diego Historical Society. If anyone in the future is doing research on diving, or on the early days in connection with diving in San Diego, or with Prodanovich himself, as an early "character" in San Diego who is very much into the history of the city, it will be there for them to use. The San Diego Historical Society Research Archive is used a great deal by people doing research work. So that is what this is for.

What were you going to say, Wally?

WALLY POTTS: I've often thought that San Diego officialdom really don't appreciate the fact that we in San Diego started this sport of skin diving. You notice that it is not mentioned. Like, for instance, we just got through having our 50th anniversary of the sport of skin diving at our club. We had quite a shindig of about 120, or 130 old-time divers.

CC: Which club is that?

P/P: The Bottom Scratchers Diving Club. Channel 8 (television station) covered it, but it was really a brief thing and they really didn't explain it like what your Historical Society would - what it really was all about.

CC: That is why I am here to get that story. Then we will see to it that it becomes a part of recorded history, and I'll see if I can't get them to write something up in their *Journal of San Diego History*. That would be a good idea.

P/P: That really would. The point that I was going to bring up now, we did not say, "We did this and we did that." There were a couple of reporters, you might say authoritative writers, who took it upon themselves to find proof that we were the oldest skin diving club in the United States, and that we started the diving on the Pacific coast prior to Florida, which was the other place that had skin divers.

CC: Who was it that found that out?

P/P: A guy by the name of Ralph Davis up in Los Angeles. He was the one that figured out all the old records and started all that stuff. one of the writers was Phinsey; he was the one who spent two or three days in my house looking through my records.

CC: What was his name?

P/P: Coles Phinsey, who writes for the sports section of Sports Illustrated, researched it pretty good and did an article on it.

CC: About when was that article published?

P/P: It was published in 1965. He did the research on it in 1964, but that was way late. This Carter (Davis?) guy did the searching on that way back in 1955, or something. Ralph Davis in Los Angeles was in the fire department there for years. By the time he got into it, there were several other clubs. He went into the research of fish records, you know, for spearing fish. I don't know why, but our club was never one for exploiting fish. We never sanctioned spearfishing contests and those sorts of things. Ralph Davis kind of wanted to get this spearfishing thing under way, publicize it. So he went into keeping of the records, which, I guess, is all right because they do have records of people spearing fish way back when. The point of all of this, what I was trying to make, was we aren't saying that we did this and we did that. These people have checked into our past history and they are the ones that came up with that we were the first in this and that.

CC: Speaking of firsts, about what year did you begin doing this thing?

P/P: In 1933 the club was formed. Actually, they did a little piddling around. We started diving probably a year or so before, just two or three of us. What we used to do, we'd go out. At that time there was plenty of seafood and we could go out and get abalone or lobster or halibut. We'd go home and say, "Let's all get together and have a fish dinner." So that is what started the club; we started meeting at his house, or Glen's (Orr) house or my house. We'd switch places, but we always had plenty of seafood. There was no problem of having a nice big dinner. This was before the days of deep freeze, you know. Now we get stuff and put it in the freezer so then when we are going to have company we get it out and thaw it out and cook it. But in those days the whole ocean was like a freezer. If you knew you were going to have company, there was no question about it. You'd go down, jump in the water and get what you wanted to make a dinner. Nowadays you can't do that. The water is not good most of the time, not clean, and it's been stripped of fish.

CC: And, of course, there are our laws now about taking stuff much. Abalones are protected now, and so on, isn't it?

P/P: No, it is legal to take a limit of four. But the point is they are getting a lot harder to find - getting quite scarce. A well-checked-out diver can do it, but, boy, it is getting to be tough. We've mentioned that a hundred times to different people. It is getting to be the same thing as commercial game hunting. Back in the 1800s they hunted game commercially. That was fine until they started to wipe it out, then they had to quit it. We are doing the same thing now. Commercially we are taking the stuff, and, with sport diving, we are taking it faster. If we don't do something about it now, right now, it is getting to a point where it is going to be too late if we don't do it immediately.

CC: Is the Bottom Scratchers Diving Club still going, still operating?

P/P: Oh, yes.

CC: Have you made representations to local San Diego authorities? Do you call them about what Jack just said?

P/P: You better believe it. In fact, on my van outside, and on his van outside, there are stickers on the back to get rid of all these damn gill nets. That's the thing that is straining the whole situation.

CC: That's fine; I'm with you guys. That is good. Jack, getting back to the historical side of this, tell me again about these artifacts you brought out. I will describe them. He has got what is apparently the first pair of goggles anybody ever made. Since you've been in skin diving these are the goggles you use.

P/P: I'd like to point out one thing. These aren't the first worldwide goggles. These are similar to the old commercial pearl divers' goggles used in the south Pacific, Japan and other places. We've never seen any models over here prior to us building them. We had read up on pearl diving and seen their sketches, photographs, or something, which gave him the idea of building them.

CC: How old were you guys when you started all of this, having so much fun?

P/P: Oh, 18 and 19.

CC: You were just a couple of crazy kids in San Diego who decided they wanted to dive under the water instead of on top.

P/P: The guy that started it, though, was Glen Orr. He was about six years older than Jack, so he was about 23.

CC: Glen Orr, is he still around?

P/P: Oh, no, he passed away in 1971. I was going to mention quite a few times now, these goggles started with the fact that we saw some swimming goggles. Glen Orr is the father of diving in San Diego. He realized that he could look under water by looking through a mask with an old commercial diver. Then he ran onto a pair of rough-water swimming goggles like Florence Chambers and all those rough-water swimmers used. He found out those would work. He had the only pair, so the rest of us couldn't dive, so we went ahead and made these up, a copy.

CC: Tell me how you made those.

P/P: It is a piece of radiator hose, a short piece cut to the contour of your eye socket, then a woman's compact that they used to use for rouge. They used the mirror after they scratched the silver off of it.

CC: A pretty good optical glass for us.

P/P: They worked reasonably well if you kept it in a flat plane across your eye, otherwise you would see double.

CC: Let me describe this. These are a couple of red radiator hoses cut to fit the eyes. They are connected to each other by a little hole through which a piece of string goes, with knots tied on the inside of each so that it holds the two pieces of hose together. The whole thing goes over the back of the head with some string and a piece of rubber.

P/P: It is inner tube.

CC: Then later on you developed this one, Jack. Tell me about this one.

P/P: We had so much trouble getting those lined up so we wouldn't see double. I was working at an elementary school when I was 15 years old and I remembered these stereoscopes. I brought one of them home, took it apart. I took a pattern of it and put it all back together and took it back to school because that was school property. That actually wasn't when I was 15, but I remembered seeing those when I was quite young. Then I run onto them when I was working there back in the 1930s. That is when I brought one home and took it apart. The only way I could fasten this stuff together I knew I could solder. So I used a piece of copper and I used a part of a dashboard of an old car that had the amp-meter down here. It was metal so I could solder those together. Then around the part that fits your head I used a piece of ignition wiring. I cut into the wire and forced that onto the metal.

CC: You are very clever. I notice that it has a little bulb attached to it and this bulb can be squeezed.

P/P: That is what we call a pressure ball. When I originally made the thing I found out that when I started to getting down around ten or twelve feet or deeper I couldn't see very well. And I found out I was just getting pressure and my head hurt, as the pressure of the water was forced against my head. So you can't equalize the pressure like you do the new masks because my nose was outside of it. This idea we picked up from the Japanese diving class. That came quite a bit later where I got this idea.

CC: Now, let's talk about this camera. This could be one of the first, if not the first, undersea camera, couldn't it?

P/P: In the San Diego area. I've been aware that they've done underwater camera work before.

CC: Now this just looks like a little box with metal all around it and in there somewhere is what Jack says is a baby Brownie camera.

P/P: Yes, it is a little plastic baby Brownie camera. It worked really very well.

CC: What year did you make that? Oh, it says here, "19351936, First Underwater Camera." Not only that, but Mr. Prodanovich showed me some pictures taken with that old camera and they are pretty good. You were saying a while ago, Jack, that people thought you were crazy to do this.

P/P: I had a real problem. In fact, in my old stuff of my junk in boxes for years, I found some of the old negatives. That is where I got the date off of one of the packets which we used to get at a drugstore. There was a Belcourt drugstore in old Town. That could be checked real easy. I have the bill for the work.

CC: Jack and Wally, both, you are going to hang onto these for awhile, but for those, and your photo album here, I can't think of any better use for them, when the time comes that you don't need them anymore, than to see that they are inherited by the San Diego Historical Society to be kept here in San Diego.

P/P: There has been some conversation about what to do with all our stuff. He is getting ready to call it a day, one of these days, and I am not too far behind him. We've got a lot of old things, like a banner we made up for the 50th anniversary. It is a quality banner that we had made up which is folded up and laid away.

CC: Who have you talked to in the Historical Society; do you remember the name?

P/P: The historical society we are talking about is the Pacific Beach Historical Society. One of the guy's name was Howard Cosell (?), or some such name.

CC: Maybe it will be possible for you to split some of your historical treasures between Pacific Beach and the San Diego historical societies.

P/P: I don't think so. I think they should all be in one spot. (The second party concurs.)

CC: Well, you know the San Diego Historical Society has got this beautiful new building in Balboa Park and it is going to be a big deal. It is a very respectable museum.

P/P: Is it something new? Is it something they just built?

CC: The old Electric Building burned, so the new building that they have put up, Casa de Balboa, the Historical Society has half the building, and two or three other outfits, like Model Railroaders and the Hall of Champions have moved into the other part of that building. It is worth visiting one of these days. Our main curator, who would be interested in the exhibits, could make an exhibit of this stuff of yours in a case so people can see it. They can see these early things that you worked with. That is a man by the name of Bruce Kamerling. With your permission, I will talk to him about this myself and see that he knows who to contact. So if that sounds good to you guys, I'll follow through on that.

P/P: It is something that really should be done. We'll just leave that on the tape. We might want to write about it, too.

CC: And I am very interested in your photo albums, too, Jack.

P/P: Scripps Institution of oceanography had our stuff exhibited there for two or three years.

CC: But not so many people get there. Now, if this stuff goes on exhibit in Balboa Park, it is going to be seen by an awful lot of people, you see. Mr. Kamerling is a very good man. He is the one who has made the exhibits at the Serra Museum over in Presidio Park. And I think he has done a beautiful job, so he will treat your stuff right.

P/P: My dad had an old muzzleloader that we had in the family for years. We donated it to Presidio Park. It is up in the museum there.

CC: Now, Jack, I want to get off onto something else. You are quite an inventor. In addition to these early things that you rigged up when you were kids, you are still working on stuff. I notice you showed me out in your garage a type of spear gun which you have just recently made for somebody. Tell me about that.

P/P: We just perfected that. It is here to stay.

CC: What is different about it?

P/P: It's doubled the power. Well, it isn't actually doubled, but you get about a third more power. An example would be a bow and arrow. We had the standard recurved bows and they went up to X amount of pounds that they pulled. Now they've come out with the compound bows which is (a) much more powerful weapon. While it isn't exactly the same, this weapon is about a third more powerful than the old weapon. It would be just like the compound bow.

CC: This is a spear gun for taking fish under water?

P/P: This is designed primarily for the big pelagic fish like the tuna and the hammerjack, those real big fish.

CC: You also showed me a very big heavy gun out there with a float on it.

P/P: That is the one we are talking about. It's got two sets of bands. The standard spear gun has one set of bands. There are generally three bands and just the average gun would have about 70-pound bands. This gun has six bands (I've got some special rubber on it) and those bands go up to around 100-pound bands. I've just tested some of them down there pulling 120 pounds. That is a little bit too severe, but once when rubber sits it gets a little bit hard. When I stretch it a time or two, it will work down to around 100 pounds.

CC: How far will it shoot a spear?

P/P: The standard gun shoots a spear roughly, let's say, 20 feet. A good standard spear gun that most of the people use will put a shaft 20 feet, but that don't mean that it is going to kill at 20 feet. That means that it will be effective at 10 to 15 feet. This other gun, the new one, shoots 30 feet, so its effective range will be 20 to 25 feet. One thing we've got to have a little more power to drive that shaft. Some of these fish you can't get as close to, so it takes a lot of power.

CC: Now, I am going to get back to the early history of the club. But first, I notice in your photo album you people have been associated with movie making, Hollywood productions and stuff like that, doing the underwater stuff. One of the photographs in this album that you were showing me was a movie of some kind. Tell me about that.

P/P: Wally was in on that. Lamar Boren called me from New York and said, "I am doing a new film with the English and they want to use spear guns for their underwater fight." He said he told them, "Spear guns went out of the picture in Thunderball which was three or four years prior." So he asked me if I could design some kind of a rocket, "See if you can get something that works like a rocket." So I started fooling with it and I got to a point where I found we could make it; then I got Wally to help me. I got two or three of the other club members to help me. We had 30 days to put that together and we did it. It worked real effectively.

CC: Where did they shoot the scenes, over there or over here?

P/P: I don't know where they shot the film - all over, I think. Lamar could tell you; I really can't tell you. They usually go to the clear water areas. Sometimes they will shoot in tanks. It is hard to say.

CC: Let's get back to the early days here. So you guys began getting together with your friends, having fish fries, eating your abalones and that, so the club just kind of grew up. Did you ever organize and write up by-laws, or any of that?

P/P: Oh, yeah. We have a book here. Wally has spent ten years in the making of this club book. Each club member is in it. You can describe it as you see fit.

CC: This is an enormous, very outsized photo album with a picture of Lamar Boren on the front. It is bound in metal and it (is quite heavy). It is really the history of the Bottom Scratchers, there is no doubt about it. This would be a very valuable artifact, as you call it, to go into the Historical Society's museum, one of these days. It is absolutely great. How active is the club now?

P/P: We still meet once a month.

CC: Here is a picture of Glen Orr. You mentioned Glen Orr. He is called the Grand Exalted Walrus.

P/P: You will find on the back side his biography and that follows through with everybody there.

CC: And here is Wally (Potts) himself. (Describing people and things while looking through the album) We must lay this aside for now, but I sure do hope that we can persuade you guys to let the Historical Society have some of this stuff in its permanent collection.

P/P: I think that would be the place for it.

CC: The Society will be here in San Diego even after your daughter is gone. I am looking to the future.

P/P: Like Wally said, the Hall of Fame has been mentioned to us to have all the club members have their stuff up there, but the Historical Society would be a better place for it because we are talking about San Diego history, and I think that would be a good place for it.

CC: Jack, let me throw this in. I have a collection of Chinese books which I am going to give to the university, but I will have the privilege of access to the collection for the rest of my life. Now I have a feeling that if you wanted to go ahead and do something about this, that you and the club members could continue to have access to them, but they would be cared for. I am just saying this. I am not the authority, but I am sure that that could be done.

P/P: I know we would like to look into this somehow, if for some reason the material was disbanded from the Historical Society for some reason outside of a fire or a catastrophe, we would like to have something in there that it would be given back to the heirs. That makes good sense. But what I was going to say, this was just returned to me. It was on television. The Diving Locker man, Terry Nicklin, borrowed it for something and he said he would let me know when it was going to be on television. It was a day when there was going to be something about the history of diving. Just like you mentioned, it would be nice if for some particular reason, if we donated it, we would like to use it for a day or for a display.

CC: I am sure that can be arranged. I will talk to Kamerling about it; I'll talk to the proper authorities. Let's get back to that history, then. I want to know more about the actual history of the club, say, back in the 1930s and 1940s, which is early on. Did you have producers and divers from various parts? Did you have any contacts with what you might call an international diving set?

P/P: Yes, we did have. Most of it was through spear fishing equipment. The early diving bit was done by articles. That is actually what started the ball rolling. Ernie Pyle (and another author) mentioned our club - what we were doing. The National Geographic magazine article was in 1949. After that article in 1949 it was really spread out, you might say, nationwide. Then I started getting letters for my diving equipment.

CC: Let's clarify this. You say you did appear in the National Geographic in 1949, an article about the Bottom Scratchers, with photographs and so on?

P/P: Oh, yes. I have letters from all over the world, from Germany, Spain and Italy, Austria asking about this equipment. I still have those letters. That is where they established the early contacts with people in diving groups. Most of that stuff was from diving people all over the world.

CC: That would be nice to have that in the archives, too. I am great for preserving stuff.

P/P: We don't believe in diving competition, per se, because it kind of gets out of hand, but the first one was in 1941 as part of the La Jolla Rough Water Swim event. We've got the mugs on that. I got the first; he got the second.

CC: You were the champs, eh?

P/P: You know how we got it? We had a 25 pound scale to weigh the heaviest fish. What we had were heavier than that. Our two were about the same weight, so we flipped a coin to see who would get first. I can look in my diary here.

CC: It says at the bottom of this cup, "La Jolla RW [for rough water] Swim, 1941, Goggling." You must give this to the Society.

P/P: Goggling, that is what they used to call it. I'd say it was in August of 1941.

CC: Let's get back again and talk about the club. You started out with - about how many of you guys started the club?

P/P: Three. The original guy was Glen Orr, then myself (Jack Prodanovich), and Ben Stone. He's a local man but he doesn't do much diving. Wally and I still dive. From then on it started to increase. The charter members were the three of us.

CC: Then when did Wally Potts come in?

P/P: In 1939.

CC: By then, how many were in the club?

P/P: Six. Remember this was kind of a nutty thing to be doing - people didn't do that.

CC: How many in the club now?

P/P: We have a thing - once a member, always a member. We believed in getting quality people. We had a maximum of 19, of which eight have now passed away.

CC: Well, you've really been a part of the history of San Diego. Where did you do most of your diving in those days - off La Jolla or Pacific Beach?

P/P: Sunset Cliffs [Ocean Beach] and La Jolla - La Jolla, mostly, because the water was better.

CC: Are there any other diving clubs in the area other than the Bottom Scratchers?

P/P: Oh, yeah. In fact, there is a San Diego Council of Diving, of which the Bottom Scratchers club is a member, or a part of. I would guess there must be in the San Diego area 10 or 15 clubs. In fact, in the Divers' Log, which is a publication put out as part of the diving council, on the cover of the publication they used to (but they don't anymore) have a form of the earliest diving club.

CC: But as far as you know, you really were the pioneers of diving and undersea spear fishing and photography for America, really.

P/P: And, as far as we know, in the world. It was sport diving. There was commercial diving before that.

CC: Did you ever have any connection with [Jacques] Cousteau or his people?

P/P: Some of our people have - like, I am sure Jim Stewart from Scripps [Institution of Oceanography]. Conrad Limbaugh was involved in a diving accident. He is dead now, but I am sure he and Cousteau were together, and possibly Lamar Boren. I am not sure about that.

CC: You speak of somebody having a diving accident. What has the history been in the Bottom Scratchers? Have you lost many people to underwater accidents? How did that one happen?

P/P: Conny Limbaugh was a part of Scripps; he was their diving officer. He was doing lots of studies and he went all over the world in his diving business. At this particular time he was over in France. There was an unusual condition over there where there was a cave way back under a mountain where the water went back in there. Way back in there, there was a chimney. You'd look up there and see daylight. There was a hole up there and stuff fell down. It was like a pyramid of rubble. I don't know why, but the French people, their diver buddies (and they are tank divers, of course) swam way back underneath there up to this hole and they came up there above water. Of course he didn't talk French, and when they got ready to go, everything was sign language, and the conjecture is that he misinterpreted the guide diver that knew the territory. Conny went in the wrong direction and he ran out of air. And that was it.

CC: Speaking of air and aqualungs, did the Bottom Scratchers have any part in the development and early use of tank diving, as you call it?

P/P: No, that was French. I showed you a couple of pictures of an ordinary primary glider.

Tape 1, Side B:

(Apparently looking at pictures again)

CC: Okay, Jack, you were talking about a sailplane.

P/P: That is what you saw a little while ago. When I was going to high school (it must have been about 1928, 1929, 1930) the Germans were doing a lot of glider flying. It seems as though the Americans wanted to do the same thing, so in each high school in the city of San Diego they decided they would have a group of fellows build gliders and go into glider flying. I was picked from Point Loma High School, one of, I think, about five people, to go ahead and build a glider. The leading glider man in San Diego was Holly Bowlus. We had just gotten the gist of the program started and as far as we got, we got the material cut, started to lay the stuff out in his garage in Point Loma. Then the money fell through and the government gave up on it. But I just went ahead and made one myself. I sketched some of the ideas so that is what you saw - was the article that was printed in the paper. I think that was about 1930, or so.

WALLY POTTS: But Craig's question was did we have anything to do with the development of the aqualung.

JACK PRODANOVICH: No, no way.

CC: I see in your scrapbook here you got a notice to appear in justice court. What did you do (to) deserve this? It is dated in January, 1951. The judge is W. L. Potts. Is this a gag of some kind? **JP:** In those days we were working with the Fish and Game Commission real close. That was for me to

appear to the spot where we were going to have the club function. They initiated me for the president for the year. So the game warden gave me that to make sure that I would appear. I was still here at Casa de Manana.

CC: How about that. That is cute. That is neat. And they filled Wally Potts' name in as the judge. I notice here that you were a member of and a surfer for the San Diego Surfing Club in 1942, and in 1940, also. Now there is one thing here. I see you've got a card here, "Diver. Recovering lost articles, unfouling propellers, hull inspections. 24-hour service." Is that part of the way you made money on your diving? **JP:** That is where I lived, 5805 Jackson. That would have to have been in the early 1939, 1940, when I lived on Ampudia Street. At that time we were diving pretty well. There were no scuba tanks.

WP: We did build an early "cuka" rig which we used during World War II.

CC: What is a "cuka" rig?

WP: It is not a full-dress air suit; it's just a face mask with the air going to a compressor and pumps, the hose going to a compressor. We did have a couple or three early models of that. **JP:** In those days if you lost something in the bay they were pretty much lost because a full-rigged diver wouldn't think of coming in there and diving unless it was worth two or three hundred bucks. Us guys got good enough to hold our breath, so they would call us if they lost anything. We'd just hold our breath and go get the stuff. So from that Glen and I hooked up a compressor. I used a Maytag washing machine engine; it was a little two-stroke engine. I got ahold of an old Brown compressor. Everybody said that was never going to get off the ground - it is not going to work; it will never fly. It worked so darn well that Wally got in and we improved it. By the time that Wally and I and Glen got through with it, we had a hell of a rig.

CC: Once again, you are pioneers.

WP: We worked on tuna boats sunk in the bay here.

CC: Unfouling propellers, and stuff like that?

WP: That, too. There was a big fully-loaded tuna boat sunk right in front of the embarcadero. We were called in and we used our "cuka" rigs and helped them unload that thing underwater.

CC: So you were salvaging the cargo, in other words?

P/P: And we've salvaged other boats. We salvaged a bait tender one time when it had sunk.

CC: When was that? What year?

P/P: The tuna boat sinking must have been about 1952 or 1953. Then we used to get agar, the seaweed. (Being served cold drinks by Gertrude)

CC: What else can we say that is interesting, specifically about the Bottom Scratchers and what they have accomplished for San Diego? A good question: "What have you done for San Diego?"

WP: We put them on the map. I feel one thing that we have contributed to, and that is the preservation of game. We worked with the Fish and Game Commission on the limit of abalone. It used to be ten (that you could take) but that kind of got out of hand because when diving first started that is the first thing that people worked on. They were just taking them and not even using them. So the commission asked us what we thought about it. They asked that they should lower the limit. We said that we didn't know for sure, but we thought that that would be a good idea because it would preserve them. Then, another thing we tried to do was get some kind of a ruling on aqualung diving. We felt that those people using the tanks should not dive in the shallow water. We felt that the guy who was just feeling for abalone could have them up to ten feet; and let the skin divers have it from ten feet to, say, thirty or forty feet; and let the tankers have it from there on out. We respected that for years and years. We never dove for abalone in real shallow water where we felt that the poor guy (who was feeling for abalone) should have that.

CC: Did you get this adopted as a regulation?

P/P: No. It was beat out in court. Now Wally has some ideas on this also.

CC: Wally, tell me about it.

WP: I think that (there is) a point to be mentioned in here. When diving first started as a sport, spearing fish, we'd go out and spear anything that was good to eat. In fact, we didn't even know about fish and game laws. One of the early game wardens (met) with Jack and he said, "You know, you guys aren't legal." He respected the fact that we were in the water doing it the hard way, so to speak, but, technically, we were illegal. Halibut wasn't considered game fish, so we could take halibut legally. Let's say, corvina, for instance. In the kelp beds were yellowtail or white sea bass. Those were game fish that were really illegal to spear. The idea of spearing in those days was people standing on bridges or piers and spearing because there was no such thing as diving such as we did. So the game warden suggested that we get together with a legislator. The guy's name at that time was Senator Kraft. He served for a long time. We went through them and we have a clipping of an article in the paper where that was done - made it legal to take game fish with a spear under water. We've always worked real closely with the commission.

CC: And that continues till today?

P/P: Oh, yes.

CC: How many Bottom Scratchers do you have - a younger generation coming along now?

P/P: No, we closed the membership up.

CC: What would a contemporary younger spear fisherman join, if anything?

P/P: Their best bet is to call us, as there is an organization in San Diego. I don't know what their function is, as to who to join. We just tell them to get in contact with the Diving Council which has lots of clubs. Some of them are open for new members. Or even if they wish to start their own club, they can.

CC: Do either of you remember when the Diving Council was formed, what year?

P/P: I don't remember. Jim Stewart could tell you.

CC: Tell me what the Diving Council is.

P/P: It is a federation of all the diving clubs in San Diego.

CC: There are quite a few, then?

P/P: Oh, yes. I would guess there are ten to fifteen clubs.

CC: But you are the pioneer club? When you guys die out that will be it for the Bottom Scratchers?

P/P: There have been many other clubs that have come and gone - no longer exist. There are ten or fifteen current clubs.

CC: Now, will there be a time when the Bottom Scratchers no longer exist?

P/P: When the last guy dies.

CC: You ought to have a tontine. Do you know what a tontine is?

P/P: No.

CC: That is where you have a bottle of very expensive champagne and the last guy that is around gets to drink it to toast the memory of all the others.

P/P: That's a good idea. One thing I might add is that we kind of got in trouble years ago because we would not really get behind and push spear fishing contests. At our original meets we talked about it and tried to play them down because we didn't feel that it was right to be butchering fish. Just because people started hunting, they didn't start seeing how much the top-dog hunter could go out and kill. So we didn't think it was right. So our club, really for a while there, they would look down over their noses at us because we wouldn't sponsor these young kids and get behind them and push this spear fishing thing. We didn't say, "Don't have a diving contest." But we tried to get them to establish minimum size fish to spear and you could only get credit for, let's say, one fish of one species, so somebody doesn't go out and slaughter a whole mess of them.

CC: Well, that makes sense.

P/P: But then as we saw how the thing developed ... We were in a couple of contests and when we came in we saw how people spear junk fish that really wasn't choice fish, bring it in and dump it on the beach.

CC: Do they have those kinds of contests now that you guys don't enter into? Do some of the clubs do that sort of thing now?

P/P: It has kind of tapered off. It did come to quite a crescendo and they did have nationwide and worldwide contests. They've got it now where, like any other sport event, is refined, where it really is a test of skill. And it is something that you can show the people what you can actually do with a spear gun, which is great. They've talked about having it in the Olympics and stuff like that.

CC: Maybe you guys have an influence on that.

P/P: We've never felt that that was necessary.

CC: Now, have you guys, like Boren (the article was about this Lamar Boren) personally done much with Hollywood and film making? Or has that mostly been Boren? **JP:** Mostly Boren, but all three of us have. You see, Lamar produced the first pilot film which later became Sea Hunt (television program). That is kind of a costly venture and like anything else, with the first one you learn a lot. He and I (Jack) played the two heavies. I built underwater sleds for it.

WP: That was our only involvement in the movies other than the fact that Jack designed that torpedo that was designed for the explosion thing.

CC: This has been a very interesting interview and I know that the Historical Society is going to be pleased at the prospect of getting some of these artifacts. So, Jack, I am going to, with your permission ... I guess you had already commented on this when we talked about this. So I am going to follow through on that and I am going to have (to) ask one of the real authorities of the San Diego Historical Society to get in touch with you. So when he calls, you will know what it is about. He can explain to you exactly what will be done with the things and how the Society will take care of them. **JP:** That will be real important because he (Wally) doesn't do anything on his own, nor do I (Jack), so we will have a club get-together. So it will be nice to know so we can relate to the others what he tells us.

CC: So, once again, I thank you very much. It has just been real great to talk with you about all of this.

END OF INTERVIEW
