MR. HARRIS: It’s July 10th, 2015, and we’re sitting in the Library and Archives at Mote Marine Lab, and I’m talking with Lin Vertefeuille.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: You did that well!

MR. HARRIS: I’m glad I talked with Virginia [Miller].

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: You practiced it? Yeah, yeah. It’s French but that’s the English way.

MR. HARRIS: I’m glad I had my interview with Virginia yesterday so I had a chance to learn how to pronounce your name before we talked.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Well, good. Good.

MR. HARRIS: How did Lin, how did you become involved with Mote initially?

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Well, actually before I even moved here, I met Eugenie Clark at a conference in Connecticut. It was offered to mentoring teachers in Connecticut, and she was the keynote speaker.

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: My students had studied - fourth graders - had studied in an Oceanography unit, and had read an abridged form of her first biography: Shark Lady [True Adventures of Eugenie Clark by Ann McGovern]. And she became kind of a heroine to them, and they were very excited that I was going to a conference where I would actually meet her or see her. So I took - you’ll have to understand, this is about 22-23 years ago - I took this enormous video camera. You know, nothing was miniaturized then.

MR. HARRIS: In the mid-to-late nineties? Yeah.
Yeah. Yeah, the old video camera. [I] took that with me. And... with the hope of being able to video her. And before her speech, I asked her if I could video her after the speech explaining for my students. Well, afterwards, she sought *me* out. She found me. And I was very nervous [and] very excited. And I... So I turned on this enormous video camera, and [I] suddenly died. I hadn’t thought of any questions to ask her! I had no introduction; no preliminary; no nothing! And she was just... seeing me just standing there with this camera! So she, then, she took it over and controlled and welcomed students. And I took it back. The children were thrilled to see her. And she also signed, oh, the program we had, so that I gave each child a copy of her signature, you know, in the program and that type of thing. So they were very thrilled. So coming here...

I had a student who had a winter vacation home in Englewood, and told me that she was affiliated with Mote. So when I moved to the area, I came to Mote, and really [it] was far smaller than it is now.

But I was very interested in it, and I was really stimulated by the other volunteers that were there. Because they were very in-depth sharing the information. It wasn’t just naming this animal or that animal. It was really going into the ecosystems of them and the whole...

And, of course, that’s always been an interest of mine. I grew up on the shore, boating and the shoreline.

But I knew that this would be a different environment here, and I was [interested]. So it was to learn. But also it was knowing that she had had [an] adjacent connection with Mote, and this whole... that really, you know, got me here, and it’s kept me here. And I never regretted all twenty-one years.

Okay. So, I mean, when you were a teacher in Connecticut, [you] taught fourth grade and then...
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Yes, I taught. Primarily. Middle grades.

MR. HARRIS: And [you] did a conference with Eugenie. And you knew she was... I mean, that was in...

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Oh yes. We knew of her. We knew of her. We read...

MR. HARRIS: She was already involved in Mote. Or was that before she came to Mote?

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Oh no. Well, she started Mote... well Eugenie started Mote, of course. You know.

MR. HARRIS: Right, right.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Right, right. I mean, not under Mote. But in Placida. Yeah. But no, I knew of her, but when I knew the affiliation... I didn’t know at that time her affiliation at Mote until my student’s parents told me. And they told me because I was moving here.

MR. HARRIS: Okay. I gotcha now. So you didn’t know about her affiliation with Mote when the conference took place?

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: She was still at Maryland. She was still at the University of Maryland. Yeah.

MR. HARRIS: So that was kind of a fortuitous...

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: I think she was always interested in students. [She was] very interested in student education. And that definitely showed... shone through in her presentations.

MR. HARRIS: Right. Well, and a lot of volunteers have told me just how... I mean, being such an acknowledged expert on Marine Biology, and being as busy as she was, she was still so generous with her time.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: That’s right. Very approachable. Very kind person.

MR. HARRIS: And [she] made time for anyone. So you came here through Dr. Clark, and she was actually... it was kind of a personal invite then that got you through the door?
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Well... yeah, indirectly. But yes, yes. I would say because of her affiliation here it got me to really [move] out. And when I came, I discovered... But at that time I think she was still in Maryland. Or [at] the University of Maryland.

MR. HARRIS: And that was twenty-one years ago?


MR. HARRIS: Okay. And then when you started here you got screened to work in the Aquarium, right? In the Fish and Invertebrate Aquarium.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Yes. Aquarium guide [in] Fish and Invertebrate. Aquarium guide. Now, I have to explain. I did other things. I, at that time - and my husband helped out - we would go up in the Mammal Center, and - it wasn’t quite at that time [but] a little later - we worked with the mammals up there, you know. “Juno” and “Ritchie” and different sperm whales. And they would have to be sometimes... you’d have to do the vitals on them and walk them. And, you know, Pygmy sperms or whatever. And so I did a little volunteering on that. But it was always Fish and Invertebrate [which] was my standard Friday job.

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: And then I did the Explorer Boat. When that started, they used to have a... [we’d] go out on the boat with the staff. And we would help with the otter trawl; the island walk. Basically that supportive [system].

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: And we had a boat at that time, so I was pretty familiar with the waters. That was about two years. I did that about... and I would do it in [the] afternoon. The morning [was in] the Aquarium, and then the afternoon on the boat.

MR. HARRIS: What were you doing in the Explorer Boat? That was just... ?

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: It was just supplemental. It was just helpful. You would help pull out the otter trawl.
MR. HARRIS: Okay.

[7:13 - 7:39]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: And work with... and you’d often lead the island walk. They would get off on the island and do a little bit of... [It was] kind of a spill island. [A] man-made island. And it had different growth that had occurred on the island. You know, Brazilian peppers, or those Australian pines, or even periwinkles. Or all kinds of flora that developed on the island, and you’d do an island walk.

[7:39 - 7:44]
MR. HARRIS: And this was through the Mammal Center? And was it a rehabilitation thing or...?

[7:44 - 8:15]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Well, no. It had nothing to do with the Mammal Center. This was the Explorer Boat you have downstairs? The Explorer Boat? Well, it’s affiliated with Mote. It’s a privately-run enterprise. But they work with Mote, and we would have... Often they would combine a ticket with the Mote, you know... admission to the Mote combined with the Explorer Boat trip. Privately-owned, separate company. But under the...

[8:15 - 8:21]
MR. HARRIS: Is that what... That still exists today? Is that what the Venture... ?

[8:21 - 8:26]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Yeah, that’s that desk downstairs. Yes. That desk outside? Downstairs?

[8:26 - 8:32]
MR. HARRIS: Yeah? Oh, just before you come in to... Okay, I understand what we’re... yeah.

[8:32 - 8:35]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: They do kayak tours now. They do kayak tours. They do the Explorer Boat. Then it was just the Explorer Boat.

[8:35 - 8:36]
MR. HARRIS: Okay.

[8:36 - 9:15]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Let’s see... Very early on, I don’t know whether there was much of an Education Department. School groups used to come in, and we used to do a slideshow. And usually for younger students a slideshow on... There were different programs. This was for schoolchildren. They would come in as a [class]. We would just give them basically a slide-show or whatever. And I think it was just when the additional buildings were [?] that time, early on, when the addition was built onto Mote. Most of where we are is additional building. You know, [it] is added on.

[9:15 - 9:16]
MR. HARRIS: Right.

[9:16 - 9:52]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Yeah. And that was for a short time. And then it became a little more professional with an Education staff and more programs [and] stuff like that. So I did that for a little while. I did do some lab tours. But I did that very briefly. Because I found time to be here to be familiar with all the
research [difficult]. I could walk people around, but informationally I felt I needed [to learn more to do a tour]. So I stopped doing that. And that’s what Joe Mathis did, and the Miller’s did. A lot of the lab tours. They still do.

[9:52 - 9:58]
**MR. HARRIS:** Right. I’ve heard, yeah, I’ve heard both of them talk about, a little bit about the process of writing the lab guides.

[9:58 - 10:11]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** What I did mostly... the contribution here in terms of volunteerism, I would say probably my main contribution has been as a mentor. I would say many of the people on my shift I mentored and trained.

[10:11 - 10:28]
**MR. HARRIS:** So you... That’s basically mentoring the incoming volunteers - the new volunteers - who are matched up with you through the Volunteer Coordinator. And you just teach them about what you do, and what they’re about to do.

[10:28 - 10:55]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** Yeah. They shadow. It’s a lot of hands-on and it’s shadowing. And it’s... sometimes it’s prior to their getting classes. Which is not bad because then when they take the classes, they’re more familiar, and they have an idea of what they want to know in taking the classes. So it’s, you know, I would say probably almost half of my shift I’ve mentored through the years.

[10:55 - 11:15]
**MR. HARRIS:** Okay. So I know, speaking with Virginia yesterday - I think, if I recall, this is still an ongoing thing - that when you’re a new volunteer you do go through a required set of classes. And I think that’s the, you know, the dozen or so classes that take place once a month... There’s one every month or something like that?

[11:15 - 11:20]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** Well, what they do... it’s usually Fall and Spring. And it’s a series of classes.

**MR. HARRIS:** Right. Yep. Jogged my memory.

[11:23 - 12:35]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** On different topics. Yeah. But sometimes a volunteer will be new [and] will come in interim between the classes or whatever. [They will] work in the summer [when classes] are not given. So at some point in their training, they’ll take... The classes are important because, you see, it’s... when you’re mentoring on shift, you can give them a lot of background on how to work with the public; how to identify the animals; explain the exhibits a bit. But what’s very important as a volunteer is to have background information. And that’s where you want to get that out of the classes. You want to know more about in-depth information: how the animal functions; their life-cycles; how they function; how they interact in an environment with each other. So it’s much more... you need that background information. So the classes are good. So one gives hands-on with the mentoring. The other is more academic background.
MR. HARRIS: Right. So, I mean, there’s still the required classes. But the Volunteer Education Committee as it was...

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Was, unfortunately.

MR. HARRIS: As it was. [It] is no more. So once you go through those initial classes, there really isn’t any ongoing learning anymore for volunteers?

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: No. What you can do - because you always self-motivate - But what you can do is attend... Our monthly volunteer meetings usually have a speaker, and [you can] pick up information that way. Attend *Monday at Mote* lectures. But they’re variable. You can get the Mote magazine that gives a little background information that way. They’re starting a Mote Insider newsletter. [There’s] background with that. You try to get it from all sources. But right, after that initial series of trainings...

MR. HARRIS: Yeah, it’s not quite as structured anymore.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: No, it’s not. You hope to keep on top if you get a briefing. In your briefings, you might get an aquarist who would come in. And [come to] know what they’re doing. But it usually relates to the actual Aquarium or the Mammal [Center]. You know. It is not going to be the research component that you’re getting that’s going on. And so the important thing is to really have information. I have to say something. The Education Department used to be a committee. Do you realize they wrote the manual?

MR. HARRIS: Yep. Virginia was talking... B. J. Peters was instrumental in that. Yeah, it was volunteer-led.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: And that is your resource. That’s a resource book.

MR. HARRIS: And the reference handbook, she told me, I mean, there was a lot of pages to it. And it was an immense contribution.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Right. But that manual is your reference book. [It] is what a lot of the, you know... And then they put together video programs. They tried to keep education ongoing, which was very important. And they did it in different ways from the written [to the visual]. But you need... I would say what you need to know as a functioning volunteer working with the [public]... But they had very good quality information. Now everything was always vetted. Everything was always vetted. But it was always *significant*. You... it was meaningful. Everything that you got from it. And they knew how... many were educators: B. J. [is] a Doctorate. And, you know, a lot of us were educators. But
[we] had Masters, and we were, some on my shift: we had a Principal, Department Heads and things. But we were... they know how to communicate as well. And knowing how to... So they were very, very beneficial.

[15:43 - 15:52]
MR. HARRIS: Right. And I know that’s kind of... I mean, that’s one of those sore points in the Volunteer Program.

[15:52 - 15:53]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Yes. You picked that up?

[15:53 - 15:56]
MR. HARRIS: I’ve picked that up, and I mean...

[15:56 - 16:14]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Let me explain one of the problems with it. You see, the Education Department is fine. They do a wonderful job of programming for students. They have a very active summer camp [and] summer programming. All school year the school groups that come through. And they’re very busy doing that.

[16:14 - 16:15]
MR. HARRIS: Mhm.

[16:15 - 16:54]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: But where is... there’s a dearth of “Where do the volunteers get that segment of education?” And to be honest, I think the Education Department is overloaded with what they’re doing. How can they...? And they don’t know the volunteers directly. Frequently they’re not even in the Aquarium because they’re in their own classrooms, and even in the water with the kids, and in their own classrooms. But it’s... there should be... I personally feel, there should be a resurrection of a...

[16:54 - 16:58]
MR. HARRIS: Some sort of a colloquium or something. Like some sort of a get-together. Yeah.

[16:58 - 17:08]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Some... a committee that works with volunteer education. And I value it. You see, most of us as volunteers, we’re here to learn.

[17:08 - 17:09]
MR. HARRIS: Right.

[17:09 - 17:40]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: I would dry up if I couldn’t learn. If I didn’t come in and feel I was getting... It isn’t the... It’s very nice. Mote is very nice in recognizing people’s pins for your, you know, the number of years you’re here. I got a very nice trophy-type thing for my 20 years. You see, it boasts twenty years on my shirt. All that is very nice. But the real thing that we want to do as docents, as volunteers, is learn.
MR. HARRIS: Yeah. Continue to be able to learn, and not reiterate the same things every week-to-week, month-to-month for the public.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Our particular shift. We have two doctors. Medical doctors. We have... many of us were educators; Principals; Department [Heads]. To show how diverse we are... Oh, a pharmaceutical sales. We have... and Rick [Magee] was an interpreter. French and Spanish. He did translations of the sheets that identified animals.

MR. HARRIS: Okay, yep. Carol Miller was...

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Did you know... what he did is he set up... He got the Turtle Ordinance written for Venice.

MR. HARRIS: Oh, really?

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: You should interview him. Rick Magee. He’s away... he’s in Canada right now. He’s our Day Chairman, in fact. M-A-G-E-E. Because he actually put in the Turtle Ordinance for Venice. Wrote it. His wife is a very active environmentalist. So you want to... I mean, they’re significant.

MR. HARRIS: Right. And we’re not talking staff. We’re talking volunteers.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: But that’s our shift. That is our shift. Now think of that shift. Oh, and then we have a housewife who raised eight children.

MR. HARRIS: Right.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: So you see how diverse we are?

MR. HARRIS: Just as important!

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: But thinking of that shift, can’t you see that the core of us want to learn?
MR. HARRIS: Right. Yeah, and that’s just one shift under one Day Chair. And one day of the week.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: That’s right. That’s right. I mean, every shift is different. Every shift is different. But this is our shift. And...

MR. HARRIS: And probably, the other shifts probably resemble to some... just remarkable backgrounds.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: But the whole point is... we come week after week volunteering. Travel, you know, getting here. Some come up from Venice. We have a new volunteer - a young man - he’s now commuting from Hillsborough County. That’s north.

MR. HARRIS: Okay. Yeah, I haven’t heard of it, but long drive, huh?

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Yeah, about forty-five minute/hour drive. So the point I’m making is we’re diverse. But I think the single common core is that we all want to learn. We all want to expand.

MR. HARRIS: And that’s just been something that’s kind of been taken away. It’s... is there a way to, I mean...

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: We share with each other a lot of times, because several of our staff are Turtle Watch people. They, you know, do the Turtle Watch, and they’ll inform us as [to] what’s going in terms of the whole programming. Not just Rick. Rick’s developed the... he doesn’t do the actual Turtle Watch. His wife does. But he develops the program. But we have other people on our shift that do Turtle Watch. So we have... we share whatever information we gather. We read an article in [the] New York Times; which you bring it in; you tell them about what you read. Or you... we try to do a little, you know, a little sharing. But we really would like - and I think we all want to get a continuing education.


MS. VERTEFEUILLE: With a designated group that really would be able to handle it and do it.

MR. HARRIS: And one that’s, you know, associated with the staff and the scientists so that there is an integrated effort.
[21:03 - 21:37]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** Well, Mote is very fortunate... Mote is very fortunate because they have... We’re not Candy Stripers at a hospital. You’ve got people who have world... I would say most of our volunteers have travelled all over the world. They do a lot of travel. They have had life experience. Oh, one person on our staff is an economist. She graduated [from] University of Chicago. She was International... working in International economy. We have people that have all life experiences.

[21:37 - 21:41]
**MR. HARRIS:** Yeah. Mr. Mathis is an agricultural... or was an agricultural economist.

[21:41 - 22:22]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** See what I mean? We all have life experiences. And I think that is a tremendous resource. This area attracts people to it. So that that resource they have... Mote is undervaluing its volunteers. Sticking them in a spot so they can get coverage in a new exhibit like “Oh Baby.” Worrying about getting coverage there. That’s fine. But it’s so much more. They could contribute so much more given that opportunity. And I think you have to... Mote should not... [They] should take advantage of some of the experiences of people they have.

**MR. HARRIS:** Is there any sort of platform or a timeline where you can bring that up to the staff or to request that again so it comes resurrected in some form? Or is it just a dead letter until someone on the Administration decides, “Hey, we need this again.”

[22:47 - 24:00]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** Well, I don’t know that they fully realize it. I think they’re looking to fill slots in terms of coverage. Like they want to make sure their special exhibitions are covered. Unfortunately, when it was reorganized... When the organization was set up, volunteers were set up under Education. And I think that was a mistake. I think it would be far better to place them under Aquarium. But the problem with that is Education has their own programming, their own emphasis, [and] involvement. And there’s very little interaction. The volunteers they work with are volunteers who lead the school groups into the Aquarium. That’s primarily whom they would interact with. So I think if it were removed away from Education. I don’t know what other category it would be under. My guess would be Aquarium. But also Aquarium is pretty darn busy. They’re understaffed. So I don’t know. Unless it could be a separate designation. I don’t know. Our new Volunteer Coordinator is wonderful: Robert [Rogers].

[24:00 - 24:02]
**MR. HARRIS:** Yeah. He’s excellent.

[24:02 - 24:34]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** [He’s] really great. I’m glad we have Robert. A lot of stuff was formed by our first [Volunteer Coordinator]. And she was wonderful. Because she was a true Liaison between staff and volunteers. And she really gave volunteers... knew how to get the most out of volunteers by accepting what they could contribute, and using and working with them. So... but I don’t know how it can be formed. But I think there should be some...

[24:34 - 24:36]
**MR. HARRIS:** But it should be considered again, most definitely.
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: And at this point I would say it’s dead-lettered. I don’t go to Volunteer Board meetings. I’m not on the Board.

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: And I have to tell you, I am more active at Ringling Museum. And I volunteered at Ringling almost as long as Mote. [As a] volunteer at Mote, I became interested in Ringling. And I’m perhaps more active in Ringling than I am at Mote. But over the time I began to become [more interested in Ringling]... because my use of what I could do here was drying up. Where I could be involved more...

MR. HARRIS: Continually active over at Ringling? Okay.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: But what I used to really respect at Mote, as opposed to Ringling was, the wonderful Volunteer Board they had, where so much responsibility was given to volunteers. Now, not freely. I mean, you always vetted always under staff leadership. I mean, it was never, you know. But they were given that opportunity of... And the volunteer was much more aware as Ringling is a State facility. I mean, here you can volunteer at the Admissions. [At] Ringling you have to be a state employee, not retired, and you have to be bonded and all of that stuff.

MR. HARRIS: Yep. I’ve heard a little bit about that.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: And the Volunteer Board at Ringling was kind of nominal. It was titular, almost titular. All you did was plan the volunteer party. I mean, you know, essentially. Here at Mote you did substance. You did input. Not that you could control or do... but you had input. And it was substance here. That has [begun] to ebb away here. That has definitely ebbed away here. It’s too bad.

MR. HARRIS: Do you think it has anything to do with the volume of volunteers here since there’s so many more here than there are at Ringling because of the... Well, maybe not so much an open-door policy. You [do] get screened. But...

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: No, Ringling has quite a few. I don’t know. No, I think it’s... They're different animals. One is State; a State facility. This is private/non-profit. So they’re very different that way. No, Ringling has a lot. There are at least a hundred active training programs: work in libraries, work in... so it’s pretty active. No, I don’t think it’s the volume. I think it’s the attitude. Or the organization. It’s the organization. Ringling strangely enough has opened up. They’re a little more inclusive in volunteer input and what they’re doing. This [has] gone in the opposite direction, and it’s too bad. It’s too bad. A
lot has improved, and a lot has gone the other way. I mean, the research here is wonderful. And I feel for the staff. I feel for the scientists, because they have to write their own grants. And they... When the downturn, when the economic downturn [hit], I mean, it was tough. A lot of the young aquarists, I don’t know how they can... Their salaries are so low. I don’t know how they could... you know. I feel for the staff here. And they’re very few. They’re doing a lot. So you know, I’m not critical. We’re very fine. And research is expanded. So, you know, there’s been a lot of good stuff.

[28:09 - 28:27]
**MR. HARRIS:** So would you... Do you want to discuss your typical workday routine in your department in the Aquarium? Is that... I mean, you do the stations in the Aquarium. [You] just move from one place to the other.

[28:27 - 28:45]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** What happens is you arrive a half-hour before, and you have a briefing. So we arrive by 9:30 am. We have a bearing with each other, and sometimes we have an aquarist come in. We really like getting a staff person [to] come in. Like an aquarist. They can inform us.

[28:45 - 28:47]
**MR. HARRIS:** Does that happen that frequently?

[28:47 - 29:30]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** That is very infrequent now. We’re lucky [if] it’s once a month, and for awhile it hasn’t even been... For many months it was none. Now let me explain. There was one simple thing they could do, and they don’t [anymore]. We used to have a notebook; a loose-leaf book. And it had a lot of information, which it wasn’t necessarily used or needed. But one was a sheet, and it listed all of the animals that were added - recently were added to exhibits - and were removed. So you had like a credit/debit list here. And you could go in and look at it. You could see, “Oh, they added a Frogfish to this Aquarium.” Or... and it was just something, just a little note...

[29:30 - 29:31]
**MR. HARRIS:** That sounds like a good utility...

[29:31 - 29:54]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** Just a little utility. A note. And that would keep you apprised on ongoing... These are live animals, so things are changing all the time. So this gave you a daily input of any change that happened that day or the day before or whatever. And it gave you an updating. They went from that, taking that completely away, and they went to this electronic thing.

[29:54 - 29:55]
**MR. HARRIS:** Okay. In the Volunteers lounge?

[29:55 - 30:14]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** Right. Now it’s very nice. Staff has to put in time to put in some stuff. But it’s not your briefing. It’s not your accounting of what [has] happened over the week; of what has been changed in exhibit[s]; what has been added; what has been subtracted.

[30:14 - 30:22]
**MR. HARRIS:** It has little daynotes but it doesn’t have those statistical graphs and charts that you used
to have?

[30:22 - 30:24]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** Well, they weren’t even statistical... They were just...

[30:24 - 30:26]
**MR. HARRIS:** Well, just tracking of what’s changed. Yeah.

[30:26 - 30:40]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** Just a list. Just a simple list. You know, “Right on this side. Added this. This was Arrow crab. Grassflat.” “On this side...” The removed list might have what they took out. And that’s all.

[30:40 - 32:02]
**MR. HARRIS:** You’d think that would be something that you would want. Because coming in on your shift you can see what’s been added, and it’s a good talking point for the public who comes in. You can tell them that, “We have this new feature; new animal in this tank.” You know, if they’ve been by before, maybe they hadn’t seen it because it’s new.

[32:02 - 32:16]
**MS. VERTEFEUILLE:** I’ll give you an example that happened two weeks ago. We have no... well, we had the electronic whatever... No staff person was there. We went out at our appointed time, [we] went out into our galleries. Into the different areas. [We] suddenly saw the Flamboyant Cuttlefish were set up next to the Dwarf Cuttlefish. Now the Flamboyant fish were removed from the exhibit [and] moved up into a different special exhibition we had a few months ago called “Survivors.” So they had been offline for ages. Suddenly they were put back. And the only way we knew was by seeing it when we appeared on shift. Now that would’ve been simple just to put in a list in the book. You know? So we’re left with not knowing if something is gone, and where it is, or if it is. If it’s hiding. Or is it gone? Or some, we discover new things added.

[32:16 - 32:45]
**MR. HARRIS:** Yeah. And it’s nice to know... I mean, you spend a half an hour at each place. So you’re going to know what’s there and what’s not. Especially when... if you’ve been here for awhile. Yeah, it’s nice to know, but...

[32:45 - 32:48]
**MR. HARRIS:** Right. Yeah, you should be notified. Certainly.

[32:48 - 32:59]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: But communication is a weak point in all organizations. It’s a weak point everywhere. But I would say improving communications would be great. That would be great.

[32:59 - 33:06]
MR. HARRIS: Alright, so, yep. That was the first time I had heard about, you know, keeping track of the animals in the Aquarium through a logbook.

[33:06 - 33:13]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Just a simple list. A logbook, right. Or it could be just a logbook. We discover new things all the time.

[33:13 - 33:28]
MR. HARRIS: Okay. So I was... I’ve been ending the interviews on a positive note - and [that] kind of sounds like what we might need today - about what your most fondest... fond memory is?

[33:28 - 33:34]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Well... Yeah, I want to let you know that although I’m making these comments that seem negative, there’s so much positive here.

[33:34 - 33:35]

[33:35 - 33:38]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Well, do you think I would be twenty-one years in a place that I didn’t like?

[33:38 - 33:40]
MR. HARRIS: No, absolutely not.

[33:40 - 33:50]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Or feel it wasn’t worth going to or being a part of? Yeah, fondest memory though. That’s very hard.

[33:50 - 33:59]
MR. HARRIS: Yeah, that was one of the hardest questions for all the volunteers to answer. Because no matter what’s going on here it’s just... [Mote] is such an amazing place.

[33:59 - 34:20]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Yeah, I’ve met... I’d say probably meeting just the people I’ve met that are volunteers or staff that are here. But... you have to be... that’s important. The people are integral to the facility. And that’s staff as well as volunteers. That would be it. I would say a lot of it is the interpersonal.

[34:20 - 34:27]
MR. HARRIS: I mean, it’s common sense to state it. But if it weren’t for the volunteers here, Mote wouldn’t be open to the public.

[34:27 - 34:31]
MS. VERTEFEUILLE: Well, and the staff. The staff is very wonderful. The staff is wonderful.
MR. HARRIS: Yeah, you can’t ignore the staff.

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: So it’s having that exposure, I guess. When you volunteer - now I’ve been involved in volunteerism with Ringling and here, and other places - the one thing you want is respect. You want to give respect because you feel it’s [important]. People; the staff you respect. But you want to get [it returned]. And respect is giving information to that person. It isn’t just the “Atta boy’s.” It’s the actual... It’s almost [subliminal?] almost. It’s knowing you are respected too. So I would say...

MR. HARRIS: Yeah, not just your name on some sort of a appreciation list at the end of the year. But...

MS. VERTEFEUILLE: It’s very nice. All that is very nice. And Mote does it better than Ringling. I gotta tell you that. It really does it better. It’s one of the best organizations, volunteer organizations in the area in terms of that.