

Remembering Bill Manlove

by Jack Thomas

Once upon a time many were involved in breathing life into the paper tiger that became the Henry's Fork Foundation, but the real driving force, the brains of the outfit, as we all know, was Bill Manlove.

Bright blue eyes, bushy eyebrows, white-haired mop, resonant self-assured voice with an East Coast accent, and a six foot two inch bulky frame made him look and sound like what he was: a polished WWII/ West Point product. Born in 1923, he was a graduate of the Academy's accelerated wartime class of 1944, from which he entered what was then the Army Air Corps.

In those flying years, after receiving his gold bars, he got a master's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Illinois and became a member of the initial faculty at the newly-formed Air Force Academy near Colorado Springs.

He rose to the permanent rank of Colonel, USAF, before he was passed over as a Brigadier General—for reasons of health ac-

ording to his wife, Rita. Rita said that his failure to reach that goal was the biggest disappointment in his life.

When Bill became an Island Park property owner, he was retired from the Air Force and working as a full-time executive for Charles Draper Laboratories, a Cambridge, Mass., defense-oriented organization that works closely with MIT. In a nearby suburb, Lynnfield, Bill and Rita owned their "city" house.

One has to struggle to separate the man from his message—his anguished cry that created the Henry's Fork Foundation. Driven by his dream of "protecting" this particular reach of water, his was complete commitment.

Bill came from, grew up on, the river banks of the town of Newburg, New York, just a few miles downstream from West Point, on the Hudson. He once told us that seeing the vast Hudson polluted and fishing spoiled by Consolidated Edison's shore-banked power plants provided the original wellsprings for his

extreme antipathy to the proposed Federal Energy Regulatory Commission filings for low-head generators in our Idaho watershed during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Montana Power had

owned a quarter section on the east bank of Upper Mesa Falls since 1913. The very thought that they might put a penstock there triggered his commitment to prevent what he viewed as criminal desecration of God's environment. "It'll get screwed up. Just like the Hudson," said Bill.

Bill had fished the Firehole, the Madison, and the Henry's Fork over the years before he appeared on our Pinehaven doorstep in August 1974. He was driving his 1965 white 3/4-ton Ford pickup with a camper top. His passengers were his wife, Rita, his mother, and Chestnut, a golden retriever (who immediately made friends with Penny, our golden). Bill's immediate mission then was to purchase property on which to build a summer home. He did, in North Pinehaven, and then engaged architect Vince Ferrese to design their dream cabin. Bill and Rita moved in during the summer of 1977.

Bill maintained his position with Draper Labs, so could only spend time on the river sporadically—one week here, three weeks there. But whenever he was in Pinehaven, his standard early morning routine brought him with his coffee cup - half-finished - to our house. Usually, in less than an hour (or about three cigarettes) he would be underway in his pickup or snow machine. Already plagued by balance problems, he seldom walked long distances. By 1982-83 he began to track down the river's friends and enemies: newspaper owners, power company officials, federal and state bureaucrats, the American Rivers Foundation, lawyers, bird watch-

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When he wasn't fishing the Henry's Fork, Bill Manlove could most often be found behind the wheel of his pickup.

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ers, Idaho's senators and representatives, the governor, conservation groups, architects, county commissioners, environmentalists, planners, and, of course, fly fishers. From Boise to Sun Valley to Pocatello he ferreted out his prey, recording on separate sheets -and in blunt terms- what he thought he'd found out, adding his opinion as to whether he figured they'd be useful or a liability to his crusade. Once back in Island Park, he'd report in with his half-filled coffee cup. All the while he would say "My mind runneth over" — an articulate, convincing Henry's Fork messiah, delivering those waters from the engines of destruction.

Convinced that his cause was just, that others he trusted agreed on the need for action, that help was available and on call, he took his first steps toward bringing the river's well-wishers under a single tent. I recall no truly formal meetings, but there were a fair number of cocktail or impromptu dinner gatherings at places like Bill's, the Lansche's, the Longwell's, or our house. He cobbled up a charter and bylaws. Those of us close at hand (fishing buddies, Pinehaven friends, those with whom he consulted as he shared his dream) became the first directors, Members (with a capital "M"), and signators of the legal documents forming the Foundation. This rather amorphous structure lasted until simplicity became an overriding need, leading to new, more obviously democratic bylaws, and a chain of command which could be better relied on to establish understandable policy.

Even as Bill, by sheer will power, was putting the machinery in motion which would help carry out his precept of proper river protection, he was losing his years-long battle with multiple myeloma. He died in the summer of

1986.

But in Mick Mickelson he had found a true disciple to carry on his work. It seems self evident to me that without Mick's conviction and energetic leadership following Bill's death, the Foundation would have foundered. Mick's commitment to keeping Bill's dream alive was symbolized at our subsequent board meetings by Bill's empty chair next to his.

In sum, this is an outline of the living power and effect of one man's belief and actions. And finally, when this river most needed help, there turned out to be two committed, strong-willed men who stepped forward as its champions.

Jack Thomas was one of the founding directors of the HFF. He served on the board and as secretary of the board until 1993. ♦

HFF Recognizes Conservation Efforts

Through the years, the HFF has recognized several people for their significant contributions to the work of the Foundation. The Foundation has two awards: the William Manlove Award and the HFF Conservation Award.

In 1987 the first recipients of the awards were Dr. William S. Platts who received the William Manlove Award, and Ed Chaney, who received the HFF Conservation Award. Both men were recognized for their contributions to the design and construction of the ten-mile solar powered electric fence near Harriman State Park.

Louis Racine, prominent Idaho attorney and member of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission, was awarded the William Manlove plaque in 1988 for his efforts on behalf of the river and Idaho wildlife.

In March 1988 the Foundation presented the Upper Snake River Fly Fishers the HFF conservation Award for their assistance with stream improvement and fencing projects.

Roger Doughty, HFF board member from Boise, was given the William Manlove Award in 1991 for his part in arranging the donation of a pickup truck to the HFF by Intermountain Gas Company to assist in fishery research. His son, Aaron Doughty, was named the recipient of the HFF Conservation Award for raising \$2000 towards the purchase of a snowmobile for winter research. Aaron did this as an Eagle Scout project.

HFF Recognized for Its Achievements

The Foundation received national and state recognition in 1988 for its endeavors in preserving the Henry's Fork. In July the HFF was a semi-finalist in the U.S. Department of Interior's Take Pride in America awards ceremony and received a certificate of merit "For meritorious stewardship of America's natural and cultural resources." In August the Federation of Fly Fishers presented their conservation award to the HFF at their annual conclave in Livingston, Montana. In November Governor Cecil Andrus presented a first place in the Take Pride in Idaho awards to HFF Mick Mickelson at a ceremony in Boise.

More recently, Idaho Rivers United recognized HFF and Jan Brown for outstanding contribution to the conservation of Idaho's Rivers, and for cooperative efforts in protecting the Henry's Fork Watershed. They presented a certificate to the HFF in March 1994 at the Idaho Rivers Symposium: Rivers at the Crossroads. ♦