

Oral History Of
John Everett Baletka

Collected By
April Baletka

April Baletka
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Oral History: Interview Release Form

In view of the historical value of this oral history interview, I John Baletha
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Signature John Baletha Date 4-6-97

INTRODUCTION: John Everett Baletka, was born on July twentieth 1957 in Salt Lake City Utah. This interview took place in his home in Orangeville Utah on March eighth 1997. April is John's daughter

April: What is your full name, and why were you named it?

John: My name's John Everett Baletka, and I was named it because its against the law not to have a name!

April: (giggle) kay!

John: No Really, because, my parents, John is a name that is in my family. My dad's name is Adolph John, so is my brother named Aldolph John, his dad had the name John, n' John, n' John, all the way through. So John is in all the boys names of the Baletka's. And then the name Everett was picked out of a hat. They had about five name they couldn't decide from, and my dad had a cousin named Everett that he liked, and he put that name in the hat and that's the name that he drew.

April: Kay, um, where were you born, and when?

John: I was born in Salt Lake City, in 1957, July twentieth.

April: Kay, um, What was your least favorite subject in school, and why?

John: Well, probably history, not history, but uh, English. And it was my least favorite subject, and I didn't understand why it was my least favorite subject, until after I was older. And that's because I'm deslectic, and I had a hard time with it. I had a hard time reading, in my life, I had a hard time to write, and I had to fight that all through school, so I dreaded history, I mean English, because that was the biggest part of English, well that is all of English, and I, I never understood it. And I been fightn' it my whole life.

April: Kay um, did you have a nickname as you were growing up?

John: Well, I had a bunch of 'em, and my daughter's favorite nickname I had when I was growing up was Flame! Because when I was ten-years-old, I was sciphening gas out of a... a truck to a fill the lawn mower up, and I swallowed a bunch of gas, and I had to go to the hospital, and I was in the hospital for about four days, when I came back my teacher, Mrs. Hardy, was calling me flame!

April: (giggle) Okay, um, what were some of your other nicknames?

John: I, I had a friend when I got in high school, and I ended up with the nickname Erve. And that's because I worked a job at this place called Wycoff. And uh, it was on the docks, and there was this great big guy there. He was, a, he played football for Arizona, Arizona State at the time, and during the off-season he worked on the dock. He was a great big guy, and I used to tease em' and taunt em' all the time, but he could never catch me, because I was too squirly! So he called me "Erp," for "Wild Erp." And then uh, my friend, my best friend Rory, changed it to Erve, and then he called me-. In fact, to this day, he calls me Erve!

April: Kay, have you had any other nick names, that you were called, besides Erve?

John: Not that I can tell during this interview.

April: (giggle) Okay, What school activities and sports did you participate in?

John: Well, not, I did, I played band, for a while. I started playing trumpet in the sixth grade, and that was an activity. I played football, from the time I was in third grade into high

school. Uh, I played a little bit of baseball, not much, a little bit of little league. And I, I wrestled in junior high and high school.

April: Okay, um, do you remember hearing, um, grandparents describe their lives, and what did they say?

John: The only grandparent I was ever, really, around was my Grandpa Gardikis, that was my mothers dad, and he was from Greece, and he was my hero. He lived with us, with our family for quite a few years. And I remember him, I don't really remember him talking about Greece to much, he was just a kid person. Uh, and one story I remember he told, that stands out in my mind, is when he came over to America, a, he was a young man then, and uh, he'd never really been around candy in his life, and so the first candy he really ever, ate when he came to America, was eh, cherry chocolates, and he ate a whole box of cherry chocolates, and he got sick on 'em. But, for every birthday, every Christmas, no matter what the holiday was, he'd give you a

box a cherry chocolates. Because that was the candy, that was really the first candy he knew, or understood.

April: Was he the oldest person, that you can remember, in your family, as a child?

John: Yes, he passed away when I was twelve-years-old, and he was, eh, eighty-one at the time.

April: Okay, um, do you remember someone saying something to you that had a big impact on how you lived your life?

John: Well, there's a lot of things that impacted my life. One thing that, is, when I was in eighth grade I had a football coach, I was fortunate to have this football coach, his name was Coach Anderson and, he was an all American linebacker for the University of Utah, he become a coach because my dad was the president of the league, and my dad did not want coaches that had boys on the team, and he recruited this coach, and Coach Anderson idolized people like Vince Lombardi and Tom Landrie. And he always went to the philosophy for Vince Lombardi. And a lot of, the biggest part of Vince Lombardi's philosophy was winning you wasn't everything, it was the only thing! Well, that was a good

and a bad thing for me ta... know, especially at that age. But in a lot of ways it, it was true, but I, you can't take it literally. You have to just... And once I learned how to use that, that saying, I was, that's, where my success, or the success I had come from.

April: That's cool! Um, how tall are you?

John: 'bout eight-foot-three.

April: (giggle) Nooo, for reals!?!

John: (Ha!) I'm five-foot-seven.

April: Kay, and what color was your hair as a child, and then as an adult?

John: Well, I went from a blond, when I was really young, I was like white hair, Then I went went from a brown, and now its grey and skin colored.

April: (continually giggling) No its not grey!

(giggle)

April: (still giggling) What color are your eyes?

John: They're green.

April: Kay, um, if you served in the military, when and where did you serve, and what were your duties?

John: I joined the national guard when I was in a, still in high school. I was, I joined it in the spring of my senior year. And I served, I went through basic training, and my advanced individual training down in Fort Letterwood Missouri. And I was a engineer equipment mechanic, which means I learned how to work on dozers, graders, backhoes, that type of equipment, big trucks. And then I spent three years working on that equipment, and then I went to a helicopter company, the one-sixty-third tac-helicopter unit in West Jordan, where I started out on a heavy equipment and I went to a... a radios. And it was just a slot was open, and I went into running the communications in radios for the tac-helicopter unit, which gave me a position in a... a heli-, a command helicopter. And a, where I would be involved in the... the top of all the missions.

April: Do you have any specific memories that stand out in your mind of the military?

John: Well, ya, I... I a... flying was the biggest memories. I would, we flew a... all the time! I would, every drill, every Summer camp, I, I flew! I got let do a lot of door-gunnin', a... probably shot a thousands and

thousand of rounds, blowin' up trucks. I never really... served in... in any war, and I'm glad! I served with some a... a lot of Vietnam vets... and I think that was my biggest memory, to be able to talk, and to be involved with them... them pilots and people that was... that served in Vietnam. Cause I joined the military right after Vietnam, and a... with all the bad publicity that them... them veterans got a... I think that was my biggest memories, to have the honor of being involved with them people.

April: What is the scariest thing that's ever happened to you personally?

John: Well, my daughter wants me to tell ya about the time that I had a rope I eh a... water-skied my whole life, and I was learning how to go backwards on a single trick. And a trick ski is a ski with no rudders, its approximately thirty-eight inches long, and eight inches wide. And I was going backwards and when I went, and I started to fall, the rope got tangled around my leg. And so, instinctively, I spun around forward, which made me go under water, and I went probably, I'm estimating, between

twenty-five to thirty feet under, cause the boat pulled me under. And when the rope released off my leg, it came off in a ripping motion. And it, that rope tightened around my leg so much, That it cut all the nerves off to my feet, in my foot, my left foot! And I couldn't feel it and so I had the sensation that it ripped my foot off! And so, the scarriest moment in my life was reaching down my leg, and to find... to find if my foot was still there, or not, and then floating up to the top.

April: Have you ever has surgery?

John: Yes, I've had surgery on both my feet, and I've had surgery on my left knee four times.

April: What did you get the surgery on your knee for?

John: Because I had a...I tor the cartilages out playing football, and with the cartilage gone, the damage continued to take out bone spurs and a... calcium growths, the removal of them.

April: And, why did you have surgery on your feet?

John: I had, my left foot was broke, and I had it re-corrected. And my...then I had both of them operated on for bunions.

April: Kay, besides being hospitalized for surgery and for swallowing gas, (giggle) is there anything else that you've been hospitalized for?

John: Nope, that's about it!

April: Kay, um, besides saving your foot, has anybody ever saved your life?

John: Mmm, no.

April: Kay, Who was it that saved your foot?

John: It is a real good friend of mine, Arnie Paulsen! Because he was driving, and he is also a really good water-skier, so he recognized that when the pul... the heavy pull on the boat, that there was something seriously wrong, so he automatically ran the boat reverse, full board, until he loosened the rope.

April: Um, have... have you ever saved anyone else's life?

John: No, not that I recall. I... I don't a... I've helped a lot of people, and my mother one time a... she had her leg broke, and she went into a seizure, and after I got back from getting help, she was on the floor, in a seizure, and a... her teeth were swallowed and I, she has false teeth, and I opened her

airway, that's, I don't know if it saved her life but I... I helped her.

April: Have you ever been in a serious accident?

John: No.

April: Um, What was the most stressful experience that you ever lived through, and what helped you get through it?

John: (moan)... I think with my jobs. I had a... with my lack of education, in... in a... with English and them type of skills... I've had to rely on my mechanical skills and instincts, which I very, I feel like I'm pretty good at. And so I've had the, the stress from going from job to job and to earn, try to keep earnin' the money I've been earnin', through this type of work. And to move, and to make the decisions, like I've made recently, to quit Utah Power and Light and to go to work for Jerry Carlson. Its been very stressful on me, and I think to get through it was... what got me through it was to work that much harder and put more effort into it, even though it took away from my family a little bit, it a... helped me get through it.

April: Um, besides the trumpet, have you played any other musical instrument?

John: I tried to play the guitar once, but I never had the patience.

April: Kay, um, how long did you play the trumpet?

John: I played it till my junior year in high school.

April: How good was ya?

John: Uh, in junior high I would take lessons and practice and I become first chair, and I got pretty good. By the time I hit high school, I was kinda... cocky, and didn't get that much involved in it, and I went to just being in the band! (muffled laugh)

April: What things have you made that others have enjoyed?

John: That I've made?

April: ya.

John: Oh... I've worked on a lot of things that people enjoy like base-, baseball fields!
Uh...

April: What about things that you've made that our family has enjoyed?

John: Oh a doombuggy, I made a doombuggy once!
Actually, I made a doombuggy all through high

school, and then I had doombuggies up till... probably eighty-seven, eighty-eight. I built a doombuggy... from scratch and a... it had a Porcha engine in it, a real fast one!

April: Where did you get the Porcha engine?

John: I stole it out of a junkyard.

April: (giggle) You did?

John: Ya.

April: What is the funniest practical joke you've ever played on anyone?

John: That's a hard question?

April: (giggle)

John: Oh...I don't know what would be the hardest thing... or funniest thing I ever pulled that I could tell you.

April: Tell Me!

John: Well, help me out here, which one do you think was funny?

April: I don't know, you've pulled so many!

John: Well I think one, my funnest one is I really enjoy scaring people. One time your mother was home, taking a bath, and I come home early from work, and I jumped in the bathroom screaming! (laughing) and scared her to death! But that really wasn't that funny to her, it was pretty funny to me at the time!

April: Kay, besides water-skiing, what activities have you especially enjoyed as an adult?

John: Oh Snow-skiing! I, I enjoy a coaching: baseball, football, and wrestling! And a lately I've learned how to... Oh and I enjoy going to drill competitions, last year more than I did this year, but I still enjoyed it, I enjoy watching my daughter work her guts out to get where she has in drill because nothing came easy to April and I really enjoyed watching the hard work that she put in to get where she got, because it was not natural, cause she didn't get any of this talent through her mother or her dad, she got it on her own! And I also enjoy fly-fishing!

April: Were there any fads during your youth that you remember?

John: Oh... I grew up in the late sixties, and I've seen everything from the hippie movement, the fads into the disco movement, which made me sick!

April: (giggle)

John: I couldn't stand the disco thing! But uh, when I think of fads, I think you think of music, the rock music, and I've always been a

rock music fan. Eh... mostly the older stuff now. But eh, I've seen everything from frisbees, when frisbees first came out. That fad to mostly cloths and the fads of cloths; the hippie type, not caring about yourself to the over-plaid, polyester, the seventies.

April: Um, how old were you when you started dating?

John: I was sixteen when I started datin' and, but I never really dated heavily through high school, I didn't, I usually, I had too much goin' on. I didn't have, not really the time, I just... I wasn't into dating that much. Uh, I probably never really started seriously dating until my senior year.

April: Do you remember your first date? Describe the circumstances.

John: Ah, it was terrible! It was a girl that I, I knew from ninth grade graduation, and neither one of us had our license yet, so we had our parents drop us of to a movie and a dinner, and we went with another couple. Nothin' too exciting.

April: Um, name a good friend that you have known for the longest period of time.

John: Rory Sandstrom, I've known him since, well I think I first remember Rory at... at second grade because that's when he was picking on me, and I enjoyed it, because his, that was Rory's way of showing his attention where he come from a... not really a troubled, but a... not really a broken home but well ya, it was a troubled home. And Rory's way of showing frustration was to pick on people. So you either really liked Rory, or you hated 'em, and I liked 'em. As the years went by we became closer and closer friends, and by high school we was pretty much best friends.

April: Do you remember where you went on your first date with mom?

John: ...Oh, I'm gonna get killed for this one!

April: (giggle)

John: Oh yes I do! We went to a movie, I think it was a John Wayne movie, but I don't remember the movie cause I spent the whole movie just talking to your mother.

April: Um, how did you meet mom?

John: Uh, my good friend, at the time, Doyle Wilson, was uh, dating, knew his uh sister, knew her sister, and which is my sister-in-

law now, Joyce, I met her basically through her.

April: Um, how long did you know mom before you got married?

John: About four years.

April: Describe your wedding proposal.

John: Well, it wasn't really romantic, I'd been goin' out with your mother seriously for about two years, at the time, and uh, I had a good job, and I had a little bit of money, and I decided to invest in a home, and I knew I was going to marry your mother, I mean there was just no doubt, I just told her, I said, will you marry me? Lets get married! It was more of a, it wasn't a surprise to her or me because, we knew we were going to be married!

April: Where was you at?

John: I don't remember!

April: Do you remember what you was doin'?

John: Just drivin' around, like we always did! No we weren't drivin' around, we was parked, I don't remember, your mom's gonna kill me for this!

April: (giggle)

John: I don't remember!

April: (still giggling) When and where did you get married?

John: When?

April: Ya.

John: It was November, uh forth, nineteen seventy-seven, and we got married at the Jordanell Reception Center, and uh... we had a really nice wedding, we had a really big reception and a Mexican band that were friends of my dad's played at our wedding, we had a lot of fun!

April: Did you have a honeymoon?

John: Yes, we did. we went, we decided since Joanne, my wife, had never been to Disney Land, that we would go to Disney Land. So we had, after our wedding, we went to Snow Bird and where I had a condo. rented, and then from Snow Bird we went to Las Vegas, and then from Vegas, we had every minuet of every day planned out. And the day we were going to go to Disney Land, Disney Land was closed, for three days at that time of year! So we never made it to Disney Land!

April: So what did you end up doin'?

John: We went to the Queen Mary, and we went to uh, Sea World.

April: And, how long have you been married?

John: It will be twenty years this year!

April: What advice would you give to a grandchild on their wedding day?

John: Don't do it!

April: (giggle) Why?

John: Don't get married!

April: (giggle) Why?

John: No, I don't know, there's, I think I would just say to work at a marriage, and first of all, make sure that you want to get married, that its not just a physical thing, that its something you want to do. I would not tell 'em before they got married, I would tell 'em... not on their wedding day, I'd make sure I told 'em years before, to date somebody for at least a year, maybe two years before you got married! I think people that get married they don't really know each other before, is a big mistake!

April: How did you find out that you were going to be a parent for the first time?

John: My wife says I'm, she was pregnant. We was married for almost two years before we had a, had you and a, it was not really a surprise! We were trying to have a child.

April: How many children did you end up having all together?

John: Three.

April: What were there names, birth dates, and birthplaces?

John: Oh, this is a memory test!

April: (giggle)

John: They were all born in Salt Lake at Pioneer Valley Hospital. April is my oldest, and she was born April fourteenth, nineteen-eighty. And Jerad was born September seventeenth, nineteen-eighty-one. And Wesley was born May fifth, nineteen-eighty-seven.

April: Do you remember anything about your children, when they were small, that they did, that really amazed you?

John: Well, April did her first dance lesson of her life. I... I liked the Blues Brothers. It amazed me cause, she was probably, well just barely walking, and when I'd turn on the song, that one certain song, she would stand by the speakers and start dancing! Without ever seeing anybody, she just automatically started dancing to the music!

April: What was the song?

John: It was bend over and shake you tail feathers!

April: (giggle) What is one of the most unusual things that one of your children did regularly when they were small?

John: They did regularly?

April: Ya.

John: Oh, I don't know... I think everything they did was unusual!

April: Okay. Um, What is the funniest thing that you can remember that one of your children said or did?

John: Man, It's hard to think like this! Why do you have something you want me to tell?
(chuckle)

April: Hmm-mm, just what ever.

John: Uh, I don't really... they always did funny things!

April: Can you think of one example?

John: Oh, I think one of the funniest things was uh, Jerad, when we was fishin', we was at Yuba, (laugh) and he wanted to fish so bad! (more laughter) And at the time I was travelin' a lot so I never got time, to spend a lot of time to fish, to sit down and takin' em fishin'. And he was sittin' there and his pole took off in the water, and I ran out and grabbed it, and he reeled in this big, old, ugly carp! And he started cryin' and whinin'

because he wanted to keep it! And I, I (more laughter) thumped it in the head with a ore a coupl'a times, and threw it in the bushes!

And he got upset because he wanted to eat it!

April: (giggle) What did you find most difficult about raising children?

John: That... no matter how much you think as a teenager, or as a young adult, that you know about kids, there's nothin' that can prepare you for the... as hard as it, as hard and as fun and as rewarding as its goin' to be! It was... to this day I'm still learnin', and I... I realize how wise my parents were because the advice they give me... would give me, I wouldn't really take it, because I thought I knew everything, and how smart they really were. And a, it's just like my kids, I'm not going to give them advice because... they're going to find out on there own... you just can't figure it out, you have to take it one day at a time, try to work through it!

April: What did you find most rewarding about being a parent?

John: I... I wasn't prepared for what I, I thought I was because I went through all the classes of having, childbirth. And uh, I was never really around a lot of small kids growin' up,

I was the youngest. And uh, I never knew how proud, or how... how good I could feel!

Until, the first time I seen my daughter, my first born, my daughter April! And uh, words couldn't describe the way I felt! Because, I'd never felt that way before in my life!

April: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

John: Oh, I wanted to be a lot of things! I wanted to be a veterinarian one time. I wanted to be a... a jet pilot, a famous football player, a... fireman, a... but I think all in all I always knew I was going to work with my hands.

April: What was your first job?

John: I was a pearl diver at Diamond Lills, which is a... slang for a dishwasher! I washed dishes at Diamond Lills.

April: What kinds of jobs have you had?

John: I was a dishwasher at Diamond Lills, and then I was a, I sold shoes, at a place called Shoppers Boot Coral, in high school. Then I worked on the docks at Wycoff, when I was still in high school. And after my basic training in military, I worked at a place called Aluma Steel, which is my, where I got

into business where I am now. I worked from Aluma Steel to Kennecot Copper, where I worked on the track gang and the lube department. Then I become a welder at Kennecot. And then I went from Kennecot, when they laid me off there, I went to Utah Power and Light, I was a plant mechanic.

April: How old were you when you started welding?

John: Oh probably... my senior year in high school, seriously welding. I played around with it when I was in junior high, but never started really welding until high school.

April: Tell me about your soap-box derby racing.

John: Oh, I started racing, well actually my soap-box derby started when I was about nine. My brother raced. And my brother was six years older than me, and actually I was eight. And my brother was a hero to me, I always looked up to him. And a, so I was around 'em at a young age. And I went, and then when I become eleven years old, I could first start racing 'em myself. My dad and I built us a car, and we raced and I took, I think, fourth place my first year. And my second year I didn't place at all. My third year, I think I took third. And then my fourth year of

racing, which would have been my second to last year, we built a whole new car. And a... we... we won everything in Utah, took first place in the state of Utah. And then I went back to Acrynn Ohio and raced there, and I won one race there. And a, it was a great experience! I was fourteen years old! They treated me like a king there! I was a, every... there was two hundred and fifty racers there, and we was all celebrities, every one of us! I met Lauren Green, Osacar Robertson, a... Bobby, not Bobby, Al Lancer... there and a, for one week we were paraded around town! We were put in a camp, like summer camp, and we a, we had every convenience you could think of! It was a great experience!

April: Tell me about your brother and sister.

John: Oh, my brother was six years older than me. A... he was very intelligent! He had the world goin' for him! He started playing the guitar at nine years old! He practiced probably harder at the guitar than anybody I've ever seen do in my life! He played... he would play until his fingers would bleed, as a teenager! He was a great football

player, he was all-state his senior year! He was about five-foot-eleven, a hundred and eighty-five pounds, and fast! And he was also, he taught guitar, on the side, for money. And a, he fell, he worked, he was goin' to the West Minister College, where he was playing football, and he was also playing in a band, playing guitar, tryin' to earn money. He was very self reliant! He didn't want help from my dad. And a, he fell seventeen feet, and landed on his head! He's been crippled ever since then. He's forty-six now. He's been crippled since he was twenty. And a, he's still to this day will not accept being crippled. It's pretty hard! And my sister, who was probably my best friend growin' up, a... she was everything to me! She a... she died when she was a, twenty-three, of brain cancer. A, growin' up with her was a joy because she was always nice to me! She treated me with respect, she was always there! After my brother got crippled, she... she kinda took over... was there for me more than anybody because I was only in a... in eighth grade at the time, my parents were constantly gone with him.

Through all the hospital stays, she was just

there all the time for me! When I was a teenager, she... she helped me through the trying times of that, and gave me probably the best advice of my life growin' up! She never had no kids.

April: What was her favorite things to do?

John: Oh, she, her favorite thing was sewin', she was a very very good seamstress! A, I can remember her junior prom! My mom and dad took her out, and they took her to all the stores, and the malls, and they says okay, this is a special time for you, you pick out any dress you want! And I was home, and I was expecting her to come home with this big, fancy dress! And she came home with a sack full of material, and a pattern, and she made the prettiest dress at the whole prom! Because, that's just the way she was, she would rather design and build her own than have anything somebody else made!

April: How old were you when she was married?

John: Oh, let's see... I was out of high school, I was just out of the army, probably eighteen at the time when she was married.

April: Who did she marry?

John: She married a guy named Rod Benett.

April: Um, what were the hardest choices that you ever had to make?

John: I think the most recent one was to quit Utah Power and Light and to go to work for Jerry Carlson, with his business and stuff. It was a hard decision! That and a, movin' down to Emery County was not a hard decision, really! It might have been for my wife and kids, but for me, it was the easiest one I've ever made! I've never had anything really hard to decide.

April: Do you feel like you've made the right choices?

John: Yes, I do!

April: Is there a person that really changed the course in your life by something that they did?

John: Not that they did... some people have changed the course of my life. One would be Allan Childs. He's changed... the way I feel about me, because he's a very successful and educated man, and he's, he's seen a lot of characters, characteristics in me that I've never seen! He's put a lot of faith and a... in me, and its helped me, the things that he's done for me!

April: Besides Allan, who are some of the people that had the most positive influences upon your life?

John: Oh, number one would be my dad! My dad's had the most positive impact on my life! Just for... cause he's always been there, and I learned how to work hard because of my dad! My wife's had a positive impact, Joanne, she... she probably kept me more strait than anything in the world! Allan Childs, Rory Sandstrom; my best friend groin' up, Arnie Paulsen; my mentor he taught me the business, from him. Buzz Rondinelli; he's taught me a lot about life and coaching, Monte Johnson has also helped me!

April: What are your hobbies?

John: Oh, water-skiing is my number one hobby! Eh... coaching baseball and football, wrestling, and fly-fishing! Going out on the desert, I like to do!

April: Are there any other things that you like to do when you are not working?

John: Watch tv. And eh, any where my kids are at... I like to be with my kids!

April: What is the most amazing thing that's ever happened to you?

John: The most amazing thing... would have to be the birth of my children! To me, it was the most exciting thrill I ever had! Other than that, it would be... the soap-box derby was pretty impressive on my life! Some of the football teams I was on was amazing too me, the championships we won!

April: What was the most embarising thing that has ever happened to you?

John: Oh... probably calling people by there wrong name! (laughter) I think that's the most embarasing thing! And knowin' that that's not their name, and calling them by it anyway! I've done that numerous times, I have a bad memory!

April: Besides the people that you met from soap-box derby, have you ever met any famous people?

John: Mmm... not really, no I haven't.

April: Have you ever won any special prizes or awards as an adult?

John: Ya, I won an award from the chamber of

an award for baseball, and that was given to me by the chairman David Luchessi. He nominated me and a, that ment a lot to me! I got it for the things I did in baseball... and the tournament that I ran.

April: Describe a time and a place when you remember feeling truly at peace and happy to be alive.

John: That would have to be every time I'm on the water, with my family, water-skiing!

April: Every time?

John: Every time, well mostly every time!

April: (giggles)

John: Except for when the weather's bad and the water's ruff!

April: I knew you was going to say that, that's why I asked!

April: What was the most beautiful place you've ever visited, and what was it like?

John: Oh, Lake Powell is definitely the most beautiful place, but... mostly a long time ago it was prettier than it is now! Cause now its too crowded, but its still pretty?

April: What does it look like?

John: Lake Powell? Oh, to me its... its other than

just water and rocks, I mean that's basically

all it is, it looks like history! Its a...
it looks like paradise to me! I could be
buried there!

April: Me too! What has been your favorite vacation,
where did you go, and why is it special to
you?

John: Well, I think one of the best times I ever
had in my life on a vacation, was when the
kids were young, in nineteen-eighty-one, we
went to Lake Powell. My wife and I, Joanne
and I, and we went to Wahlweep, and we went
with a bunch of friends, Arnie and his
cousins. We were there for about seven days,
it was just a good time cause they were all
good people, and we just had nothing but fun
every day!

April: What is the longest trip that you've gone on,
and where did you go?

John: Well, it wasn't longest in time, but when I
was in the army we came back for Christmas,
on a bus. And that wasn't that bad, but when
I went back to Missouri, I was on a bus that
stopped on every town along the way! And I
think it took us, on that bus, over thirty-
six hours, without getting off, and it seemed

like two months!

April: Is there anything you've always wanted to do but haven't?

John: Oh, I want to... I'd like to sky dive, scuba dive! A... I would like to see Australia and the outback! I want to... be a successful in business!

April: Do you have a favorite story about a pet?

John: My favorite pet, growin' up, was my dog named lucky. And I don't really have any, well... its a sad story! And that's when he died. I was sixteen at the time, and the dog was sixteen. And it was in the Summer, and in the Summer, he would lay his head upon the grass from his pen. And he was deaf, he couldn't see very well, and so he'd be asleep every night layin' there when I'd go to feed em, and I'd lay the food right under his nose. And he'd start sniffin' the food, and that'd wake him up. And one night I'd come back from a... stock car races, and I went to feed em and he didn't wake up.

April: Have you had any other pets?

John: Oh I had ducks, I was into ducks growin' up. I had a lot of ducks! One time you had, we had these two ducks, when we got married and

April was a kid, and she named 'em Pretty Duck and Chicken Duck!

April: (giggle)

John: And that was my favorite names for ducks!

April: What is your favorite style of music?

John: Oh, I like all kinds, mostly rock 'n roll! The sixties, late sixties/ early seventies music. Createns Clear Water Revival is one of my favorites. I like a lot of Led Zeppelin, I like a... ZZ Top, and now I like the oldies!

April: What is you favorite musical instrument?

John: Well, the violin.

April: Why?

John: Because my daughter makes it sound do pretty! Oh, I've been around the violin and I like the sound of it, I like to listen to it!

April: Who is your vary favorite musical group?

John: Probably Createns Clear Water Revival.

April: What's your favorite song?

John: It probably wasn't done by them... I don't really have a favorite song. I have a lot of 'em, and I also like a... I also like the old Motown hits!

April: Who is your favorite singer?

John: Oh a... yes I do... Niel Diamond is my favorite singer, and anything he sings I like!

April: Do you have a favorite movie star?

John: Oh, Clint Eastwood.

April: Do you have a favorite movie?

John: Blazing Saddles! And my favorite movie star was not in my favorite movie but, I think that kinda sums up my life!

April: Do you have a favorite artist?

John: Not really.

April: Do you have a favorite painting?

John: Not really, I like... a weird t-... I like south-werstern art.

April: Who is you favorite poet?

John: I don't have one.

April: Um, what is your favorite tv show?

John: Married With Children. I think that everybody should see Married With Children, it would change, they would not get married. Well, they would get married but, they would learn to laugh at themselves. Not be like the show but laugh at themselves!

April: Who's your favorite author?

John: Hemmingway!

April: What is your favorite book?

John: The Old Man and the Sea.

April: Why?

John: Because it made me think of me, in the trying times how to... when times are tough how to dig into your heart... to survive through them.

April: What is your favorite season?

John: Summer.

April: How come?

John: Because I love hot weather! I like it when its hot, and I like to be able to do things outside!

April: What's your favorite tree?

John: My favorite tree?

April: Ya!

John: Oh... probably a... any shade tree, other than a Russian Olive and a Chinese Elm!

April: What's your favorite flower?

John: I don't really have a favorite flower.

April: Do you have a worst flower?

John: Any that gives me, uh, them one purple thingees.

April: Lilacs?

John: Lilacs, they give me hay-fever real bad!

April: (giggle) Okay, what's your favorite holiday?

John: Oh... Forth of July!

April: Is it because of the fireworks?

John: And because its in the Summer, when you can enjoy it!

April: (giggle) What's your favorite color?

John: Blue!

April: What is your favorite sport?

John: To watch or participate in?

April: What's your favorite sport to watch?

John: Football.

April: What's your favorite sport to participate in?

John: Water-skiing!

April: Who is your favorite athlete?

John: The on I admire and respect the most would probably be Walter Payton.

April: What did he do?

John: He was a, he holds the rushing record in the NFL. I like the way he handled himself on and off the field, he was a good role model! He was a good person, who did a lot for others. He was not cocky, just a good ball player!

April: What's your favorite animal?

John: A dog.

April: Why?

John: Oh, cause no matter what you do they like ya.

April: What's your favorite meal?

John: Chicken and gravy and potatoes.

April: What is your favorite fruit?

John: An apple.

April: What's your favorite vegetable, potatoes?

John: Na, green vegetable? I like a... beans, string beans.

April: What's your favorite candy?

John: Boy, that's a hard one... chocolate.

April: Do you like chocolate better than them marshmallow bunnies?

John: No, them dried-up marshmallow Easter Bunnies are definitely my favorite!

April: (giggle)

John: They're seasonal!

April: Okay, what's your favorite cookie?

John: I'd say uh... chocolate chip oatmeal cookies.

April: What's your favorite drink?

John: C-C water. No! (just kidding!) Actually uh... coke.

April: What's your favorite restaurant?

John: Mmm... Market Street Broiler!

April: What is your favorite flavor of ice-cream?

John: Vanilla, by far!

April: I didn't see that one coming! What is your favorite game?

John: Roulette, roulett, roulett! I love playin' roulett!

April: Let's say you had to pick a label for your family members, Who best fits the following descriptions? Best cook?

John: Oh, I'll get in trouble if I answer this!

Uh... I'd say my mother.

April: Hardest worker?

John: My dad!

April: The quietist?

John: Quietist? G— Nobody!

April: (giggle) Best memory?

John: Wesley, by far!

April: (giggle) The best gardener?

John: Uh... my dad.

April: By far! The funniest?

John: Jerad!

April: (giggle) Best looking?

John: Me! (laughter) No! April's the best looking!

April: Okay, whatever. The animal lover?

John: April!

April: The most politically active?

John: April!

April: (giggle) The most mischievous?

John: Uh... Jerad.

April: The calmest?

John: The calmest?

April: Ya.

John: And its gotta be in the family?

April: (laughter) Ya!

John: The cat or the ooo... probably mom.

April: Ya, mom's pretty calm. The most athletic?

John: Oh... athletic?

April: Ya. That's our whole family!

John: No its probably... I would say you!

April: Me?

John: Ya, because your dance takes more athleticism than anything, any sport!

April: The most intelligent?

John: April.

April: The most educated?

John: I think April.

April: The best career?

John: Best career? My dad had a great career! He did, he was very successful with what he did with what he had to do, he had a good career!

April: The most creative?

John: I'd say Jerad! He's the most creative one of all! He's got the most, best imagination!

April: The wildest lifestyle?

John: It'd be me!

April: Really?

John: Well it, not now but it, well one time.

April: The most sociable?

John: Your mother is, Joanne!

April: The biggest tease?

John: Me!

April: The best house keeper?

John: Mom!

April: The most reclusive?

John: Uh... me in times, lately more than...

April: Okay, the most colorful?

John: The most colorful?

April: Ya like personality.

John: Wesley!

April: The most relaxed?

John: Nobody!

April: (giggle)

John: No I'd say Grandma Baletka's the most relaxed cause she's asleep most of her life.

April: The most frugal?

John: G—, You! April by far!

April: I am?

John: Yes!

April: The most generous?

John: Most generous? Your mom, your mother!

April: The tallest?

John: Well, it'd be my dad.

April: The shortest?

John: It'd be Wesley, just cause of his age.

April: (giggle) The best story teller?

John: Grandpa Baletka!

April: Okay, that's good!

John: Is that it?

April: Ya, Thanks!