

Oral History Interview

with

DEAN P. BEHSE

May 28, 2022

By

Michael R. Adamson

Q: So today we're at the home of Dean Behse.

Behse: Correct. In Sacramento, California.

Q: So let's start with your background, where you're from, and how you developed an interest in construction.

Behse: Certainly. I grew up in La Cañada, California, and I went to Muir High School, then went to college, Colorado College at Colorado Springs. There I was in pre-engineering, and the goal was two years at Colorado College, then go back East someplace, to Rensselaer. That was their program.

At the end of my sophomore year, it was evident to me that I was not doing well in the liberal arts curriculum and that I was losing interest in college, so I quit, basically, said, "Okay, I'm not fit for college." I found a job with a company. [laughs] I can't

remember now. I want to say Peter Kiewit. That's not right.¹ I think this was the result of my mother's contact with one of their executives in the La Cañada area.

I was offered a job as an office manager at the Air Defense Command Building in Colorado Springs, and at that time I'm a twenty-one-, twenty-two-year-old, quite immature, I think, person. At the job site was an Alan Murk, a Ralph Tice, and a Jack Grieger, who I became kind of friends with, job site-type friends. Watched Ralph Tice, very thoughtful man, in my thinking at that time, and one of his characteristics was that he would come in every afternoon after everybody left the site and bring a bag of peanuts, and I can't remember whether it was a beer or a Coke. I'm trying in my mind to picture that. But he came in with some sort of drink, and we'd all kind of sit around and review the day and what happened at the job site. I certainly learned a lot about business from that relationship, being on the job site.

One of the lessons that I think I learned at the Air Defense Command Building was I became a friend with one of the laborers, and I thought, well, this was a guy and I went over to his house, visited him. He was out in eastern Colorado about 30 miles away.

One day, Grieger came in and he says, "Get me a check for Peterson."²

And I'm going, "Wait a minute. That's my friend."

And Jack says, "Tough. I'm firing him. I want the check now. Write it out." So I learned my lesson. You do not become friends, deep friends, with people at the job site.

Q: What year was this?

¹ Mr. Behse indicates that it was, in fact, Peter Kiewit Sons'.

² Mr. Behse indicates that "Peterson" was not the actual name of the employee. He does not remember the name.

Behse: This would be '68, '69, Yeah, '68.³ In the fall, in the meantime while I was there, my mother was very insistent that I go back to school, so she was able to make me fill out the papers. I didn't really want to, but I filled out the papers for Oregon State, and Oregon State accepted me into their engineering program. So in September, October, I think, I traveled to Oregon State and started my engineering career, which I spent four years at Oregon State University. I spent the first three to get an engineering degree, and the fourth one, I picked up a business degree because Vietnam was very interested in having me come over and participate.⁴

Also during that time, my senior year of my engineering school, I broke my leg on a ski hill [in Sun Valley, Idaho] and put a pair of [parium] bands in my leg, and that ended my potential career with the Army, which I was very grateful for. Then in '66, I married my wife, Carolyn, so that, again, kept me out of the Vietnam Conflict, so I was able to do that.⁵

Q: When you were at Air Defense Command as office manager, what did you actually do as tasks?

Behse: Tasks were to handle all the paperwork coming in, coming out, write checks to the employees. I got some coaching from the office on Lake Street. I would collect all the

³ Mr. Behse clarifies that it was around September 1962. The U.S. Air Defense Command occupied the 300,000-square foot office building in early 1963. It was named for retired Air Force General Benjamin W. Chidlaw.

⁴ Mr. Behse earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering with a specialty in structures and a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration.

⁵ Mr. and Mrs. Behse were married on June 18, 1966, in McMinnville, Oregon.

mail, run errands, watch what was happening on the job site when I had the opportunity, but it was controlling what was going on. I don't remember much from Murk. I remember Grieger coming in a number of times wanting something, a check or wanting some assistance in something.

I remember one time they sent me to Denver, Colorado, to pick up a roller in the back of a pickup truck, a pretty big event for me. I hadn't traveled a whole bunch. So I used the company pickup truck to go out there, and I think Ralph had told me, "Hey, make sure you tie that roller down. I don't want it just rolling around in the back."

Well, I'm young and smart, and so I had them load up the roller, and it was a pretty heavy piece of equipment—it probably was 500, 600 pounds—and drove it down [from Denver to Colorado Springs]. I didn't have to stop real quickly and I didn't have to accelerate real quickly, and the roller made it. I remember Ralph being very critical of my activity, saying, "I told you to tie it off, and you didn't do it, so next time, don't do that." So that was a lesson learned.

Q: Did that project influence what you studied at Oregon State? Did you have an interest in construction?

Behse: I was already involved and liked construction. My father was a building contractor, single-family residences, kind of one at a time. He did the design work and laid it out, and then built the building. His background was engineering and efficiency. He worked with the motor companies back East, and then he came out to California and was at Lockheed. Unfortunately, his health—he had asthma—his health prevented him

from continuing during the war, so he went into building construction and made a living that way. But he was a graduate of Michigan State. My mother was a graduate of University of Kentucky. So, background from, in those days, college graduates.

At the job site, it was a whole new world for me, so everything was being picked up and learned, whatever.⁶ I remember they wanted a weekly report sent back to the corporate headquarters, quantities that were done, how many yards of concrete were spent, so I don't remember whether I filled them out or Jack⁷ told me how much concrete was poured that day or where it was poured, but when we got to the next project, that became very evident, the Bellevue PACCAR Building.⁸ In that job site, I was job site engineer, and that was my responsibility to record quantities that were happening, so I think my background in Colorado Springs helped my future job in Seattle.

Q: So even back at the Air Defense project, when it was still Kiewit, they were doing precast and all the things that they did later with Pankow, or was it a different sort of project?

Behse: We had tilt-up panels that were immensely thick, 8 or 10 inches thick, for [blast] protection, for bomb protection, and I remember them [that is, Jack Grieger, Alan Murk, and Ralph Tice] commenting that that was a unique situation and they had to really be

⁶ The job site for the 155,000-square-foot May-D&F department store in Denver, Colorado, completed in 1967. In 1957, the May Department Stores Company acquired Daniels & Fisher Stores Company, founded in Denver in 1864. The combined firm did business locally as "May-D&F."

⁷ Mr. Behse clarifies that it would have been Grant Burton, not Jack Grieger, on this project.

⁸ At the time of the completion of the building, PACCAR was known as Pacific Car and Foundry Company. The company changed its name in 1972.

careful with the cranes and the footings and everything else that went into that project. I don't remember much else of that, and I think I left before they had started doing much of the structure inside. We were coming out of the ground with the footings and with the concrete pours. But Grieger was very involved. He was *the* foreman. He was the guy making it happen, along with Ralph.

Q: Nice. So I guess in the years you were at Oregon State, in that time they went from Kiewit and Charlie formed his company, so when you come out of Oregon State, how did you end up at Charles Pankow, Inc.?

Behse: I was trying to remember. It must have been when I was in Colorado Springs in Air Defense Command Building. Charlie came into town, Russ Osterman, Tice. I don't remember who else was there, but those were the three principals. They had a meeting, and I keep thinking [in] Estes Park, which was quite a ways up in the Rockies, but I remember being involved in that meeting, again, a twenty-year-old, and I don't think I even drank at that time. I was [a] pretty light [drinker], a one-beer-type person. But that was the organizational meeting of the [Pankow] corporation. I was told that they were putting together this new company. That was way over my head from any type of knowledge or experience, so I wasn't looking for something. I just didn't know. "What do you mean, you're starting a company? Oh, okay." But I was invited to that. I remember late at night, whether I stayed overnight, but it was certainly a different experience.

Q: Interesting.

Behse: They all seemed to be intense, and I was trying to figure out in my back memory banks how much alcohol was involved or what the real tenor of the meeting was, but I pretty much lost that, can't remember.

Q: So they formed the company in '63.

Behse: That had to be '63, right? Late '62.

Q: When they were meeting.

Behse: Yeah. Yeah, '62, I was at Oregon State in October or so, at the end of that.

Q: So did you interview with Pankow at Oregon State or did you just come home?

Behse: I got several letters. I kept track of Pankow and ended up—I can't remember who I talked to. Finally, Russ Osterman wrote me a letter saying that they wanted me to come to work for them.⁹

Q: So this is '66.

⁹ R. J. Osterman to Dean P. Behse, February 14, 1966. See appendix for a copy of the letter.

Behse: Yeah. I was getting married at that time, and we established a time and date.¹⁰ I wrote a letter, I remember, seeing about my salary, as to how much I thought I should get paid and what bonuses I should get from my business degree, and was very, apparently, insistent as a young man as to “I want to get paid this much.”

And Osterman just says, “We’ll work it out with you.” He wasn’t going to answer. I was down to the dollar per month I was seeking to get after I got out of college.

Q: Did you interview with anyone else?

Behse: I did. I interviewed with the Mobil Oil Company and interviewed the Hyster Corporation in Portland. My wife was from the McMinnville-Portland area, and her father was pretty insistent that I not go out of town. He thought that I should stick close and sure would be a good idea if I found a local corporation to work for, but I had developed this relationship [with Pankow], I guess.

Q: So that meeting in Colorado, was that the first time you met Charlie Pankow?

Behse: Yes. Don’t remember a lot about him. He was the man coming in, but I don’t remember characteristics. He’s a businessman. He’d be about thirty-five, forty years old

¹⁰ D. P. Behse to Charles Pankow, Inc., February 16, 1966; R. J. Osterman to D. P. Behse, February 24, 1966; Charles J. Pankow to Dean P. Behse, June 7, 1966. See appendix for copies of the letters. Mr. Behse started work on July 5, 1966.

about that time? Everything was new to me, again, as far as what people did on job sites and what businessmen were, how they worked.¹¹

Q: If memory serves me, he was born in '24, because I think when he died in 2004, he was eighty, so, forty, yeah, around there.¹²

Behse: Right. I don't remember Osterman being involved in the Air Defense Command Building. It was just Tice and Murk and Grieger.

Q: Then when you joined Pankow, you met Charlie again.

Behse: I became *very* involved with the organization. They insinuated that I could go to Colorado. They had a project that was starting there. However, projects don't happen immediately, so they brought me back to Pasadena. Of course, I'd lived in La Cañada, so I had a place to stay. And they said, "Well, come into the office and do some take-off work." I actually got a week-by-week summary of what I did the first couple three weeks in there, in some of the literature I've given you.

Q: Mm-hmm.

¹¹ Mr. Behse notes that Mr. Pankow visited the Air Defense Command Building job site several times.

¹² Mr. Pankow was born in 1928.

Behse: And they said, “Well, okay, we’re going to remodel this building we bought on Lake Street, and we’d like you to run the project.”

Well, again, I’m a twenty-four-year-old with limited actual construction experience, and I was put in charge of working this old church, demoing it and then putting it back together. I’ve got several pictures of that sequence, things that noted when things were happening.

One in particular, it was an old—it went from a church to a bank or maybe a bank to a church, taking the vault apart and what we had to do with jackhammers. I’d never been around jackhammers to speak of, that I recall, and so I had a fellow jackhammering up about four feet tall [that is, up the concrete face], and I wanted him to support the hammer. Well, that’s a pretty hard job for a 90-pound hammer guy trying to go against—break the wall down. So I rigged up a rope and gave him support, and I remember he came back and sued the company because he’d been overworked by the jackhammer and was told to do something above his waist or something. It was one of those situations where he was looking for a way to get out of work, and he thought a lawsuit would fix it. I have no clue what ever happened to the lawsuit. It just disappeared.

Q: So were there other Pankow people on the project?

Behse: Yes. We were able to finish it, so now it’s the corporate headquarters. So Osterman, Pankow, [Jim] Body, and [Robert] Carlson are all people, and I’m still not off to Denver yet. Spent time there. One impression of Mr. Carlson, that he was an old Peter Kiewit Sons’ employee and friend of Charlie’s. Maybe forever how this is, I think

smelled and saw a lot of alcohol around him, and I don't know headquarters—again, young, didn't have experience, but I felt that some of his decisions and some of his time was spent not being totally squared away. I don't know what happened to him. Did he stay with the corporation for a while or did he—

Q: His name has come up, but I don't think he did.

Behse: Okay. A couple of my letters from the Colorado site about some personnel matters, I was told to talk to Mr. Body [the company's chief financial officer], and I sent the letter to Body, and Carlson got involved—I think that letter's in there—and told me that I was out of line and that I needed to rearrange my thought process a little bit as to what I was doing about personnel, that it wasn't Mr. Body's problem, even though I felt I was told to do that.¹³

So I was dealing with the upper people. Charlie was around, but come and go, don't remember anything. Always seemed very serious. I didn't see a large humor side of Charlie Pankow, because I was probably an employee and just didn't go out, have dinner with him on a social basis.

Q: So, as the story goes, when Charlie left Kiewit, he basically took his Building Division with him. Boyd and Tice and Grieger, they all had worked, so it sounds like you're about the first new hire out of college?

¹³ Dean P. Behse to James Body, May 13, 1968; Robert E. Carlson to Dean Behse, May 18, 1968. See appendix for copies of the letters.

Behse: I would project that I was, except maybe David Boyd, who came out of Purdue. David had definitely been with the company before I came onboard with the Denver project. David was with Peter Kiewit Son [*sic*].

Q: Just a little bit, yeah.

Behse: With that. So I perhaps could qualify as the first, one of the first employees of the Pankow corporation.

Q: The reason I ask is, all these guys had experience and on the job, and I never heard of what training they had gotten at Kiewit so much. So you come in as a new hire and you get thrown on a job. Was there any training? Did you have a mentor? Or it was just like sink or swim?

Behse: I was sent to Denver, Colorado, May D&F Building. I was sent up there by myself and told to get a trailer for the job site. Well, I can do that, buy a trailer. And I realized there's a lot more to buying a trailer [laughs] for an office, rather than a trailer for a mobile home. I ended up buying a mobile home trailer that I thought we could convert to a good office, and it worked.¹⁴

The company the hired a Grant Burton of Reid Burton Associates out of Colorado, and Grant Burton was to be the superintendent on the project. Grant realized I needed some more experience and literally told me to go out in the field and watch. He

¹⁴ Mr. Behse adds that Grant Burton was flexible and decided to live with the trailer he purchased, though it was not ideal.

said, “I’ll take care of it. You just go out there and see what they’re doing, learn, and see what’s going on.” So I did.

We went through the summer to come out of the ground with the utilities, but the winter proved to be quite a challenge when you’re told to go stand outside and watch laborers work trying to remove frozen ground, a very challenging site with expansive clays underneath the footings. So we had to use void form and pour concrete on top of that. It wasn’t a typical Pankow project, as far as precast or anything like that. We just poured in place. Grant was a very experienced project manager and civil engineer, had his engineering degree, which I was impressed with. I never got my civil engineering degree, or professional.¹⁵

Q: Certification.

Behse: Yeah. I never took the test.¹⁶ I was much happier getting into the management side of things rather than being a designer. I felt that I could hire smart guys in my class and that I would use their talents and use it as a business experience.

But Grant was good. Grant, to me, was one of the old typical superintendents. You’re the first one there, you’re the last one to leave, and Saturdays you come in and you do paperwork for the first half of the day, and then you go play golf. I had played some golf, but I played golf every Saturday afternoon. Well, I’m fairly newly married,

¹⁵ Mr. Behse adds that Grant Burton taught him a lot about cold weather concrete placement.

¹⁶ That is, the Engineer in Training Exam, the first step toward becoming licensed as a Professional Engineer.

and my wife and I are looking around like, “Okay, we got Sunday.” We liked to ski, and there was some challenges there to adjust to the program.

Grant also liked to go after work to the local bar, where they had two-for-ones. Grant would order two shots. That means he’s got four shots of whiskey or bourbon or whatever he was drinking. I wasn’t a heavy drinker, but I had to keep up with Grant, kind of, and he recognized that I wasn’t too much into alcohol. So I would get a beer and I would nurse that while Grant had his shots. Then I became allergic, actually, to alcohol. My nose would swell up and impact my nasal, sinuses. So every time I’d come home from—if I went to the bar, it was pretty much every day, my wife would say, “I hear you’ve been out drinking again.” Or she said, “I see you’ve been—.” I said, “Yes, I was out with Grant.” [laughs]

We talked about the job site, all business-oriented. But that’s construction, and that’s the way it was in those days.

We did get the building up. I was left at the job site for the last probably two months, closing it out with the subcontractors. There again, a whole new experience working on this pretty large building, probably 50, 70,000 square feet, and putting finishes on the walls and going through the punch list with—I did it a piece at a time, learned it, apparently got through.

[laughs] One story, HVAC, I was up checking it one day, and there was a door that you could walk into the cooling system, fan coil system. Well, I walked in, and somebody turned the fans on. Well, when you’re inside, you cannot get out, the air pressure is so strong. I was kind of resigned myself that maybe I’d be there that night, because it was like five o’clock in the afternoon, and somehow somebody shut the fan

off. They'd just been testing it, and I quickly exited [laughs] and said to self, "Don't do that again." I still remember it, obviously [laughs], because I was pretty panicked that I was going to spend a cold night. But, yeah, I was put on my own.

The next job I went to was in Bellevue, Washington, and there I had known at that time Pankow people who would tell me what they wanted, and I was given direction. By that time, I was a project engineer on the site, and typical superintendent, project labor foreman or carpenter foreman, and then project engineer.

Q: Were the Pankow people who had—

Behse: Those were all Pankow. It was Murk, Jack Grieger, and David Boyd showed up on that project for a couple, three weeks, and he [Boyd] was then pushed down to Renton to work on a project where he became the project manager rather than a project engineer.¹⁷ They had promoted him to that. But he used some of the same team. Slipform superintendent and some of his laborers, I think, were company people, went down there with him. That was in Renton.

Q: So this was earlier you had mentioned that you and Dave Boyd were roommates.

Behse: Right.

Q: That was much earlier than that [Bellevue] project.

¹⁷ The Evergreen Building, completed in 1970. Mr. Behse adds that Mr. Boyd arrived at the Bellevue job site in the summer of 1967.

Behse: This is Colorado Springs. This was the Air Defense Command Building. As I was dropping out of college, I got an apartment, and David showed up, again with the Peter Kiewit Sons', and he was a young guy. I remember his fiancée coming in from Purdue or back East and visiting him, and that was kind of a new experience for me to have some guy who was in love with this lady, and I was told, "Get out for a while." [laughs] I'm going, "Oh, really? Okay. I'll go have a drink someplace." But David was always enjoyable, spent some time with him. But it was probably two months maybe we'd spend together, three. Don't remember a lot about it.

Q: I checked my notes, and only one other person had mentioned Grant Burton, and just in passing, that I think when he joined, this is '89 or '90, Grant was still around, but the trail on Grant Burton, I don't know where he went after that or how long he worked at Pankow or whatnot.

Behse: With his drinking, I'm surprised he lasted that long. His brother Reid, they had their own construction company, and they apparently had been associated with Peter Kiewit on a previous project, because Charlie knew them or somebody knew them through Peter Kiewit Sons'.

Q: So on that project, May D&F, you were the—if I got this right, was Grant hired by Pankow at that point or just—

Behse: I think he was a contract. I would define him as a contract employee, not an employee as such. He was getting paid x number of dollars to run the project, but probably wasn't deducted as an employee's FICA or anything like that.

Q: So just before we move back to Bellevue, the May D&F Department Store was not your classic Pankow project.

Behse: Absolutely not. Now, next door, the Winmar Company—May Company was the anchor tenant for a shopping center—and the Winmar Corporation then built the rest of the mall, and that was a precast tight construction. A fellow by the name of Rendell McNamara [phonetic] represented Winmar Corporation and was in charge of that space. We left after the May Company was done. I wouldn't be surprised if there was a relationship somehow between Winmar Company, which was the developer, and Pankow. McNamara was one of their employees or had been around them or had similar experience, but definitely a precast program, but not as intricate as what Pankow was like.

Q: I looked back at my index at the back of my book, and so the Bellevue project, as far as when I was compiling index, was called the Winmar Building, so that was Winmar?

Behse: That was Winmar Corporation, developer, right. They were out of Seattle. A fellow, Frank Orrico, was the head of that, and Richard Brewer was also—

Q: I've heard that name.

Behse: —a name that will show up.¹⁸ They then started a relationship with Pankow as to efficiently build their shopping centers and do other projects around the area.

Q: Okay.

Behse: That covers that pretty good.

Q: So on both of these projects, you mentioned Grieger as the foreman, carpenter foreman, the labor foreman? He managed the people?

Behse: Kind of a general foreman. That's a better term: general foreman. Murk, Grieger, and then the project engineer. I was definitely third guy down or fourth guy down from the list.

Q: So as project engineer then, what were your tasks in Bellevue?

Behse: I was sent there early on, again to set up the office trailer, and got there before Murk did and Grieger. I was to lay out the building and to follow the building up as it went vertically, to make sure things were in the right place and to keep track of the slip forms and to watch the plumb bob that was hung off the slip forms to record how far over

¹⁸ According to Mr. Behse, McNamara worked for Brewer, who was responsible for Winmar's construction activities in the western United States.

it was so we could talk about it at the project meeting, see if we could put an anchor out to readjust the angle that the slip form was going up, and keep track of the quantities on the job site.

I've got a couple pictures in there of the stressing bed.¹⁹ That was my responsibility for pulling the pre-stressed tendons in the panels and in the floor panels, and to record those numbers. We had quite a challenge with the concrete contractor to make sure they provided the right mix at the right densities and in the right time so that we could keep the job going. Everything had to be very coordinated. Also Grieger worked the panel locations and which ones we were going to pour next, but I had to make sure that was going together.

Suffered through a couple of winters, or one winter in particular, of snow. We had a tarp over the top of the beds, and that was all crushed when I came in one morning—I was the first one on the site—because about a foot of snow on the job site in Bellevue, Washington, and ended up having to redo that. Job site was a challenge with all the rain in the Northwest to do the concrete work. Concrete works better in Southern California than it does in the Northwest just because you've got to protect it, and to keep it on schedule was quite a task.

Q: So I understand that this was your last Pankow project.

Behse: We got up to the thirteenth floor, and I had been socially, again, talking to the fellow who did the marketing for the building. He [Bob Brown] kind of set the Winmar

¹⁹ Mr. Behse pointed to photographs he had assembled for the interview. He contributed them to the Charles Pankow Foundation Collection on Charles Pankow at Purdue University.

Company up with building this type of building, and he had just purchased 13 acres at the bottom of the Warm Springs, Idaho, ski lift in Sun Valley, and he wanted to do some condominium construction, wood construction, and convinced me that I would be a good project manager to go over there.

I took his offer and came home, talked to my wife, and we decided to roll the dice and take a risk. We realized it was kind of me quitting Pankow, so some sort of a corporate ladder that I was trying to climb to be successful, and to go over to the wilds of Idaho and be a project manager, with which I was pretty short on experience. So I went over there and I was able to work with an architect. This fellow's name that was the marketing guy was Bob Brown. He was in the Bellevue area. He hired an architect by the name of Callison, Tony Callison. Tony, his firm still now exists in the Seattle area, is one of the largest architectural firms in the Pacific Northwest. Tony, unfortunately, died quite early, but I was able to work with him personally in designing a ski lodge of about 25,000 square feet, with a kitchen and full ski lodge right along the river, and then sixty condominium units.

That got overwhelmed and became a real physical challenge for myself just because of lack of experience, I think. So we [that is, Bob Brown, as developer] ended up going bankrupt on the condominium project, so I went to work for the Sun Valley Company, which owned the ski hill, and they had different recreational projects, tennis courts, swimming pools, ski lifts, and condominiums there, which I became a project manager for the Sun Valley Company, and left that job after we had a recession and the economy went down.

So I started calling around and ended up calling the fellow who I'd actually met in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Is that right? I think. I'm sorry. At the May Company, I met a Jay Perkins, who was with the Winmar Company, and Perkins, I called him as a reference and wondered if he had a job, and he said, after several months, said he could use me in Bellevue, Washington. So, again, I got a chance to go to Idaho, come back to Bellevue, where I'm thoroughly familiar, and join this Winmar Corporation. I was hired by him in about '68, '69, by the Winmar Corporation.²⁰

Winmar Corporation is two pieces. One piece is a Medical Division; the other piece is a Shopping Center Division. Perkins was more involved with the medical side, so I ended up working as a project manager for him and building nursing homes, hospitals, medical facilities for the next eighteen years. We financed, designed, and built everything. We did the original design in our office, and I was able to watch that. Then I would follow the construction to the job site. I'd fly in once a week for a couple, three days, and maybe if I think about it now, maybe I was a Charlie Pankow. I wasn't telling them how to build it, but I was observing the activity. I liked that business end of the transaction a lot better. I was there for eighteen years.

To give you a little more background, the Winmar Corporation and the Safecare Corporation were part of Safeco Insurance Company. Safeco set these companies up, gave money to develop, and Safeco says, "If we ever have a problem and we need cash, we're going to sell you guys." We were sold. We could see it coming; we were slowing down. But Thursday night, everybody was called in to say, "Thank you very much. Tomorrow's your last day," and the division was closed.

²⁰ Mr. Behse notes that Mr. Perkins's full name was Sonny James Perkins and clarifies that Perkins hired him in 1976 or 1977.

I was asked to stay on for the next year to complete all the projects that we had going, and I was, I think, the last employee of the Safecare Company. Some people were moved over to the Winmar Company, but basically I was one of the last people to leave that corporation.

I went on to work for myself. All during my career, I had rental houses. I always had something going on the side, where I would invest in a building or land and subdivide it. Even though I was working with Safecare Company, my boss, Jay Perkins, allowed me time and understood what I was doing, so I could go out and pursue some of my own interests.

I ended up owning office buildings and finally ended up doing some development on my own. I did a development down in Tacoma with an office building, and went up to Everett, Washington, near Boeing Field, where I had purchased some property in a bankruptcy and I then expanded that to some three or four acres around the corner. I just kept building on this kind of as a business idea, and purchased the three acres and ended up putting in a 55,000-square-foot warehouse on that site. I own that warehouse today. I built it in the year 2000. Ended up as a quote, “operator” of a warehouse, and that’s my job today, which doesn’t require very much one-on-one activity, but telephone calls or lease activity. So that’s kind of where I am today.

After being down here in Sacramento [where] I ended up, when I was in Idaho, I bought a house there and I still maintain that house today, so I have two sites.²¹ That’s about what’s happening to my life.

²¹ Mr. Behse notes that he worked in Idaho from 1968 to 1974.

Q: What's interesting is I didn't know about this healthcare side of Winmar, but if you look at the list of Pankow projects, there's a lot of Winmar shopping centers.

Behse: A number of them, yes.

Q: And they're going on in the seventies and eighties. Did you ever run into any of the Pankow people or have any interaction with those jobs?

Behse: On the HVAC side, we used [Bob] Heisler and—I can't think of the other fellow's name right now.

Q: Sandahl?

Behse: Lee Sandahl as our consultant for several of the hospitals. They gave us direction, ways of saving money by slipforming the return [unclear] or something like that. Most of our stuff wasn't—concrete, let's say, rather than slipform, but using different methods. And in any type of bidding process, they seemed to be the low bidder, so it was always nice to have that work. We used them as a strictly design team on a project or two. But we built during those eighteen years some fifteen, eighteen hospitals from Texas to Little Rock, Arkansas, California, and it was all out of the Northwest.

Q: So just to circle back a couple things—

Behse: Of course.

Q: —you mentioned that when you left Pankow, Charlie sent you a letter.

Behse: He did.

Q: It's in here somewhere. You said to the effect—oh, you have it right there? Is that the letter?

Behse: I have it here someplace. Here we go. Yes, I had obviously been kind of broadcasting that I was considering leaving the Pankow Corporation as we were near the top of the [Winmar] building, and Charlie wrote me and said that he—and I wrote him a letter, resigning. He states—this is his May 10 letter of '69. He says, “I am not surprised at your decision. However, I am disappointed that you have not been able to anticipate or project your future in a more constructive manner.” Personality. I don't remember personality conflicts. Maybe I just passed those off or maybe he thought that was my problem, but he says, “Personality differences in career planning sometimes are distorted by emotions that get to all of us at some time or another.”²²

Q: You don't recall specifically what he's alluding to?

²² Charles J. Pankow to Dean Behse, letter, May 10, 1969. See appendix for a copy of the letter.

Behse: I really don't. I think by that time I'd been kind of in the evenings working with the design for the condominiums. I was moving on quite rapidly, and whether I wasn't showing up enough for work, I'm pretty loyal usually. I don't know why I would have gotten somebody angry at me particularly, but don't have any recall of that.

Q: It says here that he planned to be in Seattle during the week and would visit you personally? Did that happen?

Behse: I don't recall. I don't know if that did go through. I just don't recall anything about it.

Q: So Seattle is a couple hours south of Bellevue, so I—

Behse: Seattle is across the lake from Bellevue.

Q: Oh, okay.

Behse: Horizontally. It's a twenty-minute drive.

Q: Oh, okay. I was thinking of Bellingham.

Behse: Yeah. Bellingham's further north.

Q: Right.

Behse: No, this is Bellevue, Washington.

Q: So when he said—I mentioned on the phone that Mike Liddiard, who was just on the project as a laborer, I believe, had mentioned that Charlie came, paid a visit to the Winmar project, put his boots on, and was getting in the concrete or something. Sixty-nine was after it was done, so he wouldn't have been coming to Seattle for that, but I'm just going back to—

Behse: Don't remember Mike, for one. Charlie was always coat-and-tie. Charlie wasn't hands-on.

Q: So the image was he had his coat and tie on, but he had put on some boots to, like, walk out to the—so that was the image that I had. [laughs]

Behse: Okay, I could accept that, the fact in the Northwest it's pretty damn wet, and Charlie probably didn't get his nice shoes—

Q: Patent leather shoes.

Behse: Patent leather shoes, yeah, on, and probably said, "Hey, let me borrow some boots and I'll go walk out there, see what the mud looks like." Right.

Q: So this is still the Charles Pankow Legacy Project, so basically if you wanted to sum up Charlie as the leader of the company or your impression of him in your time there, how would you do that?

Behse: I learned everything I've learned about pouring concrete, pre-stressed and precast units, from Pankow. I've had some other background since then, but they were definitely pioneers. They were doing things that people challenged. They had an architect, T. Y. Lin, I think, Kulka & Associates, who were with them and challenged the codes, and allowed it to happen.²³ They were pioneering that.

I had a number of arguments with the steel rebar-bending corporation, Bethlehem Steel. That was one of my jobs, was to make sure all the material was there in time to pour the panels. It was very complicated bending. The bars had to be within like half an inch of being accurately bent, and usually when you're bending steel bars at a steel plant, you take ten of them in line and bend them over. Well, this had to be bent one way and then bent the other way and bent back, and if it wasn't right, I'd get to reject them. So I remember a lot of arguments with the detailer, and they had a rough time accomplishing that, but they did. We got it done. I don't think a whole lot of reinforcing steel has shown up on the exterior of those wall panels, in other words, rust spots and things fifty years later. So I think we did a good job.

But we used special concrete. We used concrete that was white in color. I've forgotten how we accomplished that. But there was definitely a challenge to almost every

²³ Mr. Behse refers to the structural engineering firm, T. Y. Lin, Kulka, Yang & Associates. Partners Felix Kulka and Y. C. Yang were former students of Lin's at UCLA.

portion of the job, but it also was put together and met the schedule, and buildings were a little harsh for an office building, which we were doing. It left some flexibility, but not a lot on the interior floor planning, which that was a problem of the new owner/operator of the space, but probably also affected if they were going to use the building and when to change it. They couldn't change the floor plan very flexibly or easily, where in today's market, they're doing large open spaces and just putting small interior panels into it, just enough to control things, a completely different thought. I'm not so sure they'd even be very effective today if they were to start, say, working for Microsoft or somebody like that, but maybe they've modified their plans, too, which I suspect they probably have.

Q: Probably adapted.

Behse: Yes.

Q: So when I got involved with this project, Charlie Pankow and the company was known as a design-build pioneer. I'm just wondering, in the sixties, was that a term that was used or is this something that was a label applied later to what they were doing?

Behse: I don't recall specifically one way or the other. I'd certainly say we were pioneering. I didn't have to market the company or what. It just wasn't my job. I was a gofer on the job, so I wouldn't be trying to tell somebody creating this thing or "Let me work with you on the design and see how we can adjust it or modify it." So at my level, I wouldn't put it out as a design engineering company, although it's probably what it was.

Q: Probably what it was. Right.

Behse: I could accept that.

Q: One of the things that comes up with a lot of the interviews is the difference between Kiewit and Pankow and why Charlie left. Kiewit prided itself on bidding the project, so it was a bid project, whereas Charlie wanted to negotiate a price.

Behse: Exactly. Especially with the Winmar Corporation, which I had most relationship with, it was always like, "Okay, we've got the land and we want to build the building. We need so much square feet. What can you do? How can we make this work?" And especially the shopping centers, which they needed square footage and needed to get them done fairly quickly, a quick time frame. So, yeah, I think they worked hard at that.

Q: So as office manager on the Air Defense Building, you can tell that it was a big project sort of guided the cost, what you were doing? Were you doing accounting at all about staying with the bid or no?

Behse: I believe the accounting was done back in Omaha or someplace. No, we didn't. But I did have to do paychecks. I think I probably had to get the superintendent or Murk to sign the paycheck, but I would make them out, figure the FICA. I was a cog in the wheel. I don't want to brag too much on that one. [laughs]

Q: So, Ralph Tice. That was the once project you worked with him?

Behse: Yes.

Q: You didn't work with him again?

Behse: I was not able to, no. He was a very thoughtful man, and he had kind of farm tales of what he used to do on the farm or how they used to do things, very entertaining from my twenty-year-old standpoint. Enjoyed him. Grieger was a little more straight in, and Murk was very held back. Murk was there, but I don't remember him as a personality.

Q: So did you report your resignation to Alan, too, before he left the project, or it was just you and Charlie, and you had a big party, going-away party? [laughs]

Behse: No, no, we didn't.

Q: Or you just kind of slid out the door?

Behse: I was definitely at that time a summer employee. I'm sorry, this isn't Air Defense Command Building.

Q: I just skipped to Bellevue.

Behse: Now we're in Bellevue. Okay.

Q: With Murk, yeah. You mentioned Alan Murk. I went back and forth. Sorry.

Behse: I think I just slipped out the back. It was disappointing that they had to get somebody else in to cover for me. I don't think there was anybody being trained, that I recall, to follow it. Jack knew enough about what I was doing, and Alan did, so, "Thank you very much. We've done what we can do here."

Q: You mentioned Bob Heisler and Lee Sandahl. After you left, did you ever stay in contact with any Pankow people?

Behse: I really didn't, no, no, only through the Winmar Corporation, their consulting on our hospitals and a couple of locations. Heisler was down on our New Orleans project. I think he consulted with that. I remember being in the car one time with him going through there, but it wasn't anything intense or didn't get any impressions.

Q: So the projects you did in those eighteen years with Winmar, they were all over the place or you said mostly in the Northwest?

Behse: Did a nursing home, several nursing homes in the Northwest, a hospital in San Antonio, Texas, two phases. We did a hospital in Little Rock, Arkansas. Where else were

we? Colorado Springs, Colorado, got back to Colorado again. After going to school there, I ended up on a hospital [project]. That was one of the first ones we did. Again, we'd hire the architect in those cases, preliminary design through us, hire an architect, then hire a general contractor. So we tried to guide them in what we wanted, but hospitals are pretty complex and you've got to have an architect who's qualified for that.

I'm trying to think where else we were. Kansas, New Orleans. In Biloxi, Mississippi, built a hospital that was taken out in the hurricane of Chalmette, Louisiana, and we knew that there was a problem with seawater coming in in case there was a hurricane, but we didn't anticipate the total deluge of that disaster, and our hospital was flooded out. The hospital in Biloxi, Mississippi, sustained, has sustained at least one or two direct hits by hurricane coming in, and it was 200 yards from the beach, so the tidal flood came in. We built it high enough, kept the generators up there so the hospital could remain in function.

I was sent down after one of the hurricanes. We had a flat roof with gravel on it, and then a patient tower of glass just the other side of that. It took all those rocks and hit every one of those patient tower pieces of glass, and just destroyed them. The second piece of glass, I don't remember one that was broken out, thermal pane, so the hospital continued to function, which we thought was pretty good.

Q: On each of these projects, you relocated to the site?

Behse: No, I was still based in Bellevue, Washington, and I was able to fly in. Sometimes I would fly and be there for a week, but [very] few times did I stay the weekends. I was

looking at the progress that was made by the general and the amount of work that they'd accomplished, and I would approve the pay requests, so I was approving two- and three-million-dollar pay requests. That was my job as the superintendent for Safecare Company.

Q: And just if I did my math right, so if you were there eighteen years, when they shut it down, this was like the '89, '90 recession, sort of national recession, hit everybody, construction really badly.

Behse: Yeah. It was a challenging time for me with no job. I was kind of forced into going to work for myself and start different projects, which financing was a challenge, but I enjoy that part of it.

Q: As I go in the book, that was a turning point for Pankow because no one was building these buildings that Charlie Pankow wanted to build, and that's where they got into sort of the—

Behse: Overshipment, yeah.

Q: Get into hospitals and they got into redesigning interiors and some historic—all the stuff that Charlie really kind of frowned on, but as Rik Kunnath says, "If we didn't do something, we're going—."

Behse: “We’re not going to do well.”

Q: “We’re not going to do well.” And I remember one of the buildings they did in 1988 was South of Market in San Francisco, and that was basically the last tall building that was built in San Francisco until 1999, so that was a bleak period.

Behse: I say it’s “my” basically project, was the first high-rise in Bellevue, and if you go to Bellevue today, it looks like forty-, fifty-story porcupine quilts. It is a very dense area and is exploding with new properties due to Amazon and Microsoft. It’s going vertical, like San Francisco, very dense. And this building is dead center. I’ve got some early pictures for you there of the job site, and you compare those with where it is today, you can’t even see beyond the first façade.

Q: At this point, then, when this was built, if you’re in Seattle, can you see across?

Behse: Our building was up to the point where you could see just over the bump of land from Seattle. We could see the Seattle high-rises. But this would be the first building you could see from Seattle looking across the lake.

Q: Cool.

Behse: It’s a lifestyle. It was fun.

Q: Nice. Any concluding remarks before we turn off the tape and look at these pictures?

Behse: I don't think so. I enjoyed my time. My life seemed to work out well, had a good life, and Pankow was part of it. Out of college and production, went out to Idaho and found enjoyment in the outdoors, and I'm pretty athletic, or was, did triathlons and a number of—was competitive, usually did pretty good, and kayaked all throughout the western states and the Arctic Circle, done a number of adventure things, and I've been able to travel all over the world, so no complaints.

Q: Sounds great. I thank you for your time.

Behse: Thank you. Appreciate the ability to share with others and to bring up maybe some new people or new ideas.

Q: Great. I guess we'll stop there.

[End of interview]

Appendix of Cited Correspondence



CHARLES PANKOW INC. • BUILDERS

February 14, 1966

Mr. Dean P. Behse
109 North 15th Street
Corvallis, Oregon

Dear Dean:

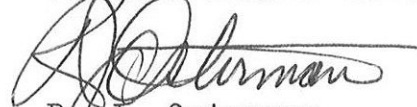
Mr. Pankow has asked me to contact you since he was unable to see you on your last visit to this area and he is presently in Honolulu concerning our job there.

Since you have indicated an interest in joining our company and with our knowledge of your background, we want you to know that we would like you to join us in some engineering capacity as soon as you are available. We are sure that we can work out satisfactory salary arrangements at least at the going rate for your qualifications.

Please indicate in writing your acceptance and availability time as soon as possible so that we can plan accordingly.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES PANKOW INC.



R. J. Osterman

RJO:ccc

109 N 15TH ST
CORVALLIS, ORE
February 16, 1966

Charles Pankow Inc.
1000 East Walnut St.
Pasadena, California

Attention: Mr. R. J. Osterman

Gentlemen:

Thank you for your letter of February 14, 1966. I must say it was a great Valentines Day greeting.

I am definitely interested in your corporation for future employment. However I don't feel I can make any decisions until I have talked with you again and I know more about your company; its background, financial set up and organizational outline.

At the present time I am planning to be in the Southern California area during the week of March 21, 1966. I would like to meet with you on the 23 of March if possible. I have set a deadline of April 1, 1966 for making my decision on employment. I feel this is a reasonable date because I will not be able to start to work until July 5, 1966. This will give my employer three months to plan for my arrival.

Thank you for your interest in my future.

Sincerely Yours,

D. F. Behse



CHARLES PANKOW INC. • BUILDERS

February 24, 1966

Mr. D. P. Behse
109 North 15th Street
Corvallis, Oregon

Dear Mr. Behse:

We will plan to see you in our office sometime during the week of March 21, however, I cannot be positive at the present time that we can meet on the 23rd. Please call when you arrive and we will work out the time.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES PANKOW INC.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. J. Osterman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R. J. Osterman

RJO:ccc



CHARLES PANKOW INC. • BUILDERS

June 7, 1966

Dean P. Behse
c/o Louis M. Christensen
Route 1, Box 99
Amity, Oregon

Dear Dean:

I am in receipt of your letters and am sorry I haven't had a chance to answer them sooner. I was out of town the best part of last month, and so far this month too.

The 5th of July will be fine for starting, however, I cannot be positive as yet where you will be located. I am hoping for Denver but if not it will be San Jose. I will write you the week of the 13th to let you know definitely where you will be located.

As far as moving procedures are concerned - get a few estimates from reputable movers and submit them to this office for approval.

Congradulations and best wishes to you and your bride-to-be.

I am looking forward to seeing you again.

Yours sincerely,

CHARLES PANKOW INC.

Charles J. Pankow

CJP:ccc

15220 N. E. 16th Place #10
Bellevue, Washington 98004

May 13, 1968

Charles Pankow Inc.
2476 N. Lake St.
Altadena, California

Attn. Mr. James Body

Dear Jim.

I hereby propose that all Charles Pankow Inc. employees taking up permanent residence in the Seattle - Bellevue area receive a 3.6 % increase to their annual incomes to offset the abnormally high cost of living in the area.

To back up this proposal I present the following data taken from the United States Book of Facts, Statistics and Information, 1967 edition and the Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1967 edition.

1. The Seattle area was the sixth highest of twenty-five (25) cities listed in the United States Book of Facts, Consumer price index in 1965.

2. Seattle was the second highest in comparative cost of living index of 20 cities in 1963 as listed in the United States Book of Facts.

3. As a result of a much higher cost of living index the state of Washington's average hourly earnings are surpassed only by the states of Alaska, Nevada and Michigan; but in each case this money is earned by working a greater number of hours.

I would suggest the extra cost of living expenses be paid in separate monthly checks as is the practice of several large firms in the Seattle area.

Yours Very Truly,

Dean P. Behse

cc file
enclosure - additional information for your consideration.



CHARLES PANKOW INC.

May 18, 1968

Mr. Dean Behse
Charles Pankow, Inc.
Post Office Box 875
Bellevue, Washington 98004

Dear Dean:

Mr. Body has given me your letter of May 13, 1968 regarding your proposal for the "cost of living adjustments" for people working in the Seattle area.

First of all, Mr. Body does not handle the wage policy for the company. Therefore, any questions you may have regarding such matters should be discussed with either myself or FINE Mr. Pankow. Secondly, while we appreciate your interest in the people working for us, you must be assured that we have been continually concerned with wage, medical, insurance, profit sharing and bonus policies since the formation of this company. I think you can appreciate the fact that such policies are guided both by our desire to reward the people who work with us and sound business practices relating to such matters. RIGHT

WHAT OTHER STAND E TAKE

We are available at all times to listen to legitimate problems and we will attempt to resolve them to everyone's satisfaction. However, the tone of your letter seems to imply that you have arbitrarily designated yourself to act as an agent in securing a wage "adjustment" for yourself and others. I think you can appreciate the fact that these matters, including the "investigation" which you have deligently put together, can best be handled by those in the organization responsible for such policies. WHO IS. - BODY?

NO COMPANY POLICY STATED BEFORE.
MEANLY A PROPOSAL
NO BODY HERE IS INCLUDED THIS IS NOT DISCUSSED WITH OTHERS
NO POLICIES EVER STATED NONE WRITTEN WHO KNOWS
RIGHT FOR S.F. NOT SAN JOSE.
NO THIS IS REASON FOR SEPARATE CHECK.

In reference to your investigation, we do not ordinarily make any adjustments for "cost of living" between work areas. As you are aware most of our people in Seattle will be coming from the San Francisco area which bears a higher cost of living "index". You can see the difficulty in asking someone to take a "decrease" because of moving to a lower "index". Also, there are two later cost of living indexes which we have (Autumn 1966) which of course, vary from your "investigation". I would be happy to talk to you regarding your interest in this matter when I am in Seattle. COULD I SEE THEM.

I think that it is best for all concerned that when you have a problem of this nature, you discuss it with me or Mr. Pankow instead of writing letters to others suggesting changes which are not your responsibility. OK NOW.

Yours very truly,

R. E. Carlson

REC:1

SINCE WHEN IS AN EMPLOYEE NOT INTERESTED IN HIS SALARY,



CHARLES PANKOW INC.

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

May 10, 1969

Mr. Dean Behse
Charles Pankow, Inc.
P. O. Box 875
Bellevue, Washington 98004

Dear Dean:

Your letter was waiting for me when I returned to Altadena yesterday. I am not surprised at your decision, however, I am disappointed that you have not been able to anticipate or project your future in a more constructive manner. Personality differences and career planning sometimes are distorted by emotions that get to all of us at some time or another.

I hope that the short time you have been with the company will provide some positive stepping stones for your new environment.

I plan to be in Seattle during the week and will visit with you at that time personally.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES PANKOW, INC.

Charles J. Pankow

CJP:s