

Hotline To Heaven

By Jonathan Phillips
Special Correspondent

There's this joke that everybody's heard, so I won't write the whole thing.

It seems that for some reason heaven is overcrowded, and St. Peter asks the Devil if he can take a few folks for a while until the space situation is remedied. So it is that three famous tee vee preachers end up down below.

A week later, the joke goes, Lucifer is on the hotline to St. Peter, begging him to take the three back. It seems that one had convinced the demons to supply icewater, one had healed the burns and wounds of the condemned, and the third had raised enough money to air condition the place.

Though the joke may have been thought up in the interest of poking fun at the tee vee preachers, I give it another interpretation.

The point is that no matter how adverse the circumstances, people will continue to do what they do best, or what comes naturally.

That is why Patrick O'Neill is somewhere in Oklahoma.

In the slammer

In the late sixties and early seventies Patrick O'Neill would have been called an activist. Nowadays people who don't know any better call him names better left unprinted.

Patrick is the type of person who translates his beliefs into actions. If he believes something is right, he does it. If he believes something is wrong, he tries to put a stop to it.

He's also the type of person who says what he thinks, to anybody who'll listen. If you won't listen, he'll try to make his message so that you can't miss it.

Patrick believes it is right to try to help your fellow man, especially those less fortunate than you. He is active in his Greenville church, and does such things as help organize walk-a-thons to raise money for starving people overseas.

He doesn't think it is right to kill your fellow man under any pretext, and is uncomfortable with the fact that nations maintain special organizations and spend massive amounts of money for just that purpose.

That's why he has done things like set up a booth for the Greenville Peace Coalition right next to the Marine Corps recruiting booth on the campus of East Carolina University.

Not only is Patrick the kind of person who does what he thinks is right, fights what he thinks is wrong, and says what he thinks on either account, but he is the type who is not afraid to take risks to do any or all of the above.

That is why Patrick O'Neill went to the slammer.

Protest

Patrick does not think the United States should get involved in the El Salvador conflict. When Salvadoran troops arrived for training at Fort Bragg, Patrick and others went to Fort Bragg to protest.

During that non-violent protest Patrick was arrested, and eventually found his way into the slammer at Lillington, sentenced to 90 days for what went on the books as a traffic violation.

It was there that Patrick did what he does best; what comes naturally. He was appalled at the conditions in the jail, and organized other prisoners to protest them. It was then that he began his sojourn, bouncing from one jail to another like a just-paid farmhand hitting the juke joints on Saturday night.

Patrick didn't shoot any pool where he was, though--the Harnett County Jail, and federal pens at Petersburg, Va., Atlanta, and now, at last word, somewhere in Oklahoma.

That's why I think there is a non-violent prison protest brewing somewhere out on the prairies.

Coming home

Not everyone agrees with Patrick's politics or methods. In Greenville, people who don't share his views and/or are too cynical to believe an y effort to make things better are worthwhile have privately and publicly called him a marxist, a fool, and many other things, as mentioned earlier, better left unsaid.

But even if you don't agree with his opinions or methods--and I myself don't, in every case--you have to admire Patrick for doing something about what he believes in.

That is why I'll be glad when he comes home, so



L-R: Lindsay Warren, Gov. Jim Hunt. Hunt addressing Media at 400th Celebration News Conference.

Truckers Can Request Weight By Permanent Scales .

Raleigh-The 1982 General Assembly recently passed two pieces of legislation affecting the trucking industry, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) announced.

According to DMV Commissioner R. W. Wilkins Jr., the first piece of legislation is an effort by DMV to accommodate North Carolina truckers and citizens by offering them an alternate weighing service. Now a trucker can request that his load be weighed and verified on a permanent set of scales that the N. C. Agricultural Department has approved. Previously, whenever a trucker was stopped by a portable weight crew, his load was automatically weighed on portable scales. This alternate method of verifying weight loads on permanent scales went into effect June 18, 1982.

The second phase of legislation is an effort by DMV to protect the law-abiding truckers and citizens from the improperly licensed and unscrupulous ones, says Commissioner Wilkins. Truckers' license tags may now be purchased on a quarterly year basis. However, DMV officials have discovered that some truckers often fail to register for licenses during the first and second quarters. To further prevent this improper licensing and protect those properly licensed truckers DMV has implemented a penalty system as a result of the recent legislation.

Effective October 1, 1982, whenever a trucker is improperly licensed, he will pay a registration penalty. "The penalty," says Commissioner Wilkins, "will be the cost of what the license plate would be for one full year plus the cost of the remaining applicable quarters of that year." This penalty will apply to both N. C. truckers and out-of-state truckers unless the out-of-state truckers can furnish proof that he jis satisfactorily licensed within his own state.

For more information, truckers may contact the Raleigh DMV license/theft/weight enforcement section at (919)733-7872.

that you and I can help him out, or argue with him, whichever suits us.

No time soon

It'll be awhile.

After he gets out September 4, Patrick goes to court again in connection with another peace protest at the Pentagon.

John Hinckley, Jr. tried to kill the President, and he is in the hospital.

Patrick O'Neill tried to prevent killing in Central America, and is in jail in Oklahoma.

Others have killed, raped, and beaten their fellow man. Patrick O'Neill has cared deeply about his fellow man, and is in cells right beside them.

There are few, it seems, who share Patrick's goals and visions. There are fewer still who work as hard for their goals and visions, whatever they may be.

That is why, if by some error Patrick O'Neill ever ends up in Hell, 'Ol Lucifer will be on the hotline right away, trying to keep one crazy Irishman from spreading his love and caring all the way through Hades.

Planning America's 400th Anniversary

A news conference was held in the auditorium of North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh last week. The purpose of this meeting was to inform the media of the progress and plans for the commemoration of America's Four Hundredth Anniversary, hear Governor Hunt's remarks concerning the event, to hear from Lindsay Warren, Jr., Chairman of the event and to hear Dr. John Neville, Executive Secretary, America's Four Hundredth Anniversary Committee.

County Chairmen have been appointed by Governor Hunt to co-ordinate county participation in the event. Mrs Kay Williams of New Bern has been appointed Chairman for Craven County.

Basic responsibility for planning the 400th Anniversary rests with America's Four Hundredth Anniversary Committee of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. The Committee was created by the 1973 General Assembly "to advise the Secretary of the Department on the planning, conducting, and directing appropriate observances of, and on providing necessary physical and other requirements for, the commemoration of the landing of Sir Walter Raleigh's colony on Roanoke Island; and to advise the Secretary of the Department upon any matter the Secretary might refer to it."

In a statement of purpose, adopted in 1979, the Committee determined that it would "serve primarily to initiate, direct and co-ordinate a broad range of programs," though certain projects have been considered so essential to the success of the commemoration that the Committee has emerged as their sponsor. Most notable among these sponsored activities are the construction of an Elizabethan-era ship, a publications program, archaeological activities, a major exhibition of materials from the British Library and a series of commemorative events. It is expected that other activities, such as essay contests, symposia on Sir Walter Raleigh and his associates, and the issuance of commemorative stamps and coins or medals will also be sponsored by the Committee.

Numerous additional activities, including films, programs in music, drama and art, and folklife festivals have been presented to the Committee for its possible endorsement or sanction.

As part of the Department of Cultural Resources under Secretary Sara W. Hodgkins, the Committee works closely with the other agencies of the Department. Since 1979 the Department has provided the Committee with a two-member staff headed by Dr. John D. Neville, as Executive Secretary, with offices now located in the Capital Area Visitor Center in Raleigh.

Watch for future article concerning the 400th commemoration such as Elizabeth II; Archaeological Activities; British Library Exhibition; Commemorative Events; and stories about Indians of early days.

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