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Scene From Top O' The Hill

By: Jack Kelly

One of the big troubles with people who work in Washington is that they don't have any sense. Naturally, most all of them have brains and are smart but they lack common sense or common knowledge. You take like when I came back to work from my vacation down home in Burnsville. I came back and showed everybody the present that Ransom Higgins had given me. Every one of the people I showed it to said it was fine. Nobody knew what it was. Finally, one young fellow, new to Washington, asked what it was. The fact that he let on that he didn't know something proved he was new because, in this Town, you don't ask questions. As a matter of fact, all you get by asking questions is a reputation for asking questions. No one ever gives you a direct answer to a question. Mostly, they ask you one in return. For example, if someone asks how to do this or that, the person asked will counter by asking "What do you mean?"

Anyway, I brought Ransom's fine present down to the office with me, in my breast pocket, where I carry it for good luck because Ransom assured me it was a very potent good luck charm. At the coffee break, that's the period every morning and every afternoon when people decide they just can't go any further with their work of running the Country except they troop out some place and get a cup of coffee. I pulled out my Higgins' gift and very casually stirred my coffee with it. Well, the three fellows at the table watched me but I didn't say anything. Just returned it to my breast pocket. Didn't say anything. Just noticed that they had sort of popped their eyes at it. Finally, when I stirred my second cup of coffee, one of them commented "I haven't seen one of those for a long time" and reached out for it.

I handed it over to him and he turned it six ways from Sunday as he examined it. After a while, he handed it to another fellow and said, "That is a beautiful piece of bone carving, where did you get it?" Before I answered him, the others at the table were all examining it. Everybody agreed that it was, in truth a fine piece of carving. Two of them used it for a stirrer before it was returned to me. One of them commented he had seen one something like it down in the Virgin Islands. Now that was his mistake, because I have worked the Virgin Islands more than scum, and I know a little bit about them. So, I cut him off. "No," I said, "you are thinking of the bamboo swizzlestick they have down there. This one's bone." The fellow wasn't thinking of any such thing. He was talking through the top of his hat, but like most Washington people, when someone imputes know-

ledge to you, you don't deny it, and he agreed it was the bamboo he was thinking of, and allowed he had never before seen one carved from bone.

I then explained that, in my mountains of North Carolina, they came in all sizes and that my friend Ransom Higgins was the greatest expert in the County on producing them and that he spent all of the winter months just carving on the bones that he located during the autumn months. Then I lied and explained that Ransom was making me a complete set in assorted sizes. Right away, even though nobody knew what it was that they had examined, all of them wanted to know how much a set cost. Actually, since they didn't know what it was, they had no idea of how many came to a set, but no one wanted to display his ignorance so no one asked that question. I informed them that Colonel Higgins, I just added that title to make it sound more impressive, was making me a set for thirty-five dollars. Everybody seemed to think that the price was reasonable and made comment that good carving like "Kelly has there" is becoming a lost art" and things like that. One fellow allowed that a complete set of them would look wonderful on the buffet table at a cocktail party and asked "How large a set did you say you were getting?" Now he knew that I hadn't mentioned any number at all, but he was curious, so I told him I had just ordered a small set of twelve but that a really full set was eighteen. He said "That's what I thought."

We finished our coffee and returned to work.

Later in the day, two of them dropped by to enquire if I could possibly drop a line to Ransom and find out what he would charge for a "full set of eighteen" of my now famous North Carolina Mountain Swizzle-sticks. I stalled them off by telling how Ransom only did it as a personal favor for me. They left my office very down-hearted and I was laughing to myself. Then, just before quitting time, a friend of mine, George Turner from the Kentucky mountains, dropped by and enquired about the "bone carving" I had brought back. I showed it to him and George put on his little Kentucky smile as he examined it, then he asked "Didn't even one of them know what it was?" I told him no they didn't. Then George said, "Kelly, if you start a business of selling these, your friend Ransom Higgins will depopulate the mountains of raccoons, won't he?"

So now, what was once of use only to a raccoon has become a desirable piece of equipment to a Washington cocktail party. Step up, Folks. Get your real, genuine North Carolina Mountain Swizzle-Sticks. Made from real, genuine raccoon "you-know-whats".



RALEIGH REPORT

By: Ernest Messer

Although much remains to be done here in the General Assembly, the day of adjournment is now in sight.

The Department of Revenue has increased its estimated tax take for the next biennium by \$28,400,000. The Governor immediately recommended disposition of all but \$6,000,000 of this revenue.

Included in the Governor's recommendation was \$9,600,000 to increase teacher pay by a full 20% instead of by 17.58%, as had been previously recommended.

Although there will be some moves to increase teacher pay by more than 20%, this will probably be the official figure that will prevail. Moves to go beyond the 20% figure will be mostly politically motivated — with little expectation that they will be adopted — and with no revenue to back them up if they were adopted.

The bill to permit the "electric cities" to buy power facilities in newly incorporated areas was killed by the Senate Utilities Committee.

A Senate bill to abolish automobile inspection was killed by the Senate Highway Safety Committee.

The local option, or "piggy back" sales tax, and \$10.00 town and city automobile tag are both dead.

There has been considerable criticism by individuals and newspapers about the number of local bills that must be passed by the General Assembly.

There are many of these bills, but they are given more careful consideration than we are led to believe.

Each local bill must be considered and passed by a committee in each house. Most of these bills are written by someone in the office of the Attorney General, then they are scrutinized by the introducer and by the people back home.

The newspapers carry accounts of all these bills and the Institute of Government sends a list daily to every county and city board.

The charge that local bills are carelessly prepared and passed is not justified.

There are, however, too many local bills. They deal with many matters that should be handled by County Boards of Commissioners and by town boards.

But the people seem to want the final power left with the General Assembly. Some time

ago I permitted a local paper to state that we were giving consideration to placing Haywood County under the Home Rule Act — which would permit the County Commissioners to set pay scales for all working in the Court House. I immediately received several protests but not a single call in support of such an idea.

There will be a hearing this week on bills that have been introduced in both houses to require the election of all County Boards of Education.

I was able to amend the bill to regulate the teaching of Cosmetology in the public schools so as to permit the continuance of classes now in existence. This protects the classes we now have in Haywood County. There is a lot of opposition to this bill. It may not pass.

Letter To The Editor

Pensacola, N. C.
May 28, 1967

To the Editor of
THE YANCEY RECORD
Burnsville, N. C.

Dear Sir:
The women of the Burnsville Garden Club have shown great civic pride in taking their time, effort and money to beautify the city park with dozens of flowering plants for many to admire during the summer.

Some citizens of Burnsville lacked this civic pride when they allowed the beauty of their park to be marred by consenting to that ugly building and signs being placed in such a prominent location.

Let's hope that some day soon these men will realize how many were hurt by their thoughtless mistake, and find another location for this building and signs.

Sincerely,
(Mrs. Wm. F.) Grace Grassmuck.

CROSSWORD

ACROSS		DOWN	
1. FBI operator	43. Not astir	1. European kite	16. Came out into view
5. Flaps	2. Track man	2. Track man	19. Pain
9. Black and blue	3. Shakespear's river	3. Shakespear's river	21. Corroded
11. Recipient of a gift	4. Pinch	4. Pinch	22. Cleansing agent
12. Run away to	5. Having digits	5. Having digits	23. Torrid
13. Italian volcano (var.)	6. Pismire	6. Pismire	24. Frozen dessert (pl.)
14. Lair	7. City on the Ganges	7. City on the Ganges	31. Bisect
15. Dispatch	8. Vacation spot	8. Vacation spot	32. Blackened
17. Like	10. Cove	10. Cove	34. Sheer
18. Erbium (sym.)	11. Boy's nickname (poss.)	11. Boy's nickname (poss.)	35. Tulip, for one
19. Points			37. Also
20. Measure (Jap.)			39. Hawaiian timber tree
21. Land measure			
22. A toolhouse			
24. Pretended writer of nursery rhymes			
27. Curved molding			
28. Insect			
29. Biblical city			
30. Cheep			
31. Greeting			
33. Southeast (abbr.)			
34. The south of France			
35. Forbid			
36. Locations			
38. Lurk			
40. Biblical name			
41. Clear up, as a mystery			
42. Horse's hoof plate			