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Scene From Top O' The Hill

By: Jack Kelly

A couple of weeks ago, the 26th of October, to be exact, Blanche and I drove from Washington to her home in Wheeling, W. Va. It was a very special occasion. "Pappy" was ninety-two years old. The term "Pappy" is one of deep affection, particularly on my part. I won't say that I wish he had been my father because that would have stepped Blanche and me from being married or else cause a lot of conversation. However, old man John Joseph Patrick O'Brien stands foremost in my estimation of various of Nature's Nobleman whom I have met. In fact, I have met over a million people and he is the top of the crop. That statement is not an exaggeration because I know 988-thousand of them by name.

I first met Judge J. J. P. O'Brien a little over 27 years ago, right after Blanche and I got married. At that time, Pappy was 65, and, at that time, 65 was "old" to me. Today, I take a more lenient view of people who are merely 65. In any event, Pappy convinced me, within five minutes of our meeting, that he was a very smart man. He did it by putting me to work. He had me mowing grass before I realized he had tricked me. Blanche and I had driven over to her home so that she could accept congratulations or commiserations upon having married me, dependent upon which side you favored. Anyway, the "old man" was down at their summer place, located in Fish Creek, West Virginia. When we arrived there, Pappy was mowing the huge lawn. None of this foolishness of a gasoline mower. It was hand-operated. We walked out and he had the pleasure of meeting me, then Blanche ducked out. Left me and Pappy all alone. One of us started talking. Probably him because I am a quiet type.

As we talked, we also walked because Pappy was pushing that lawn mower. After a bit, he attempted to light a cigarette. This was a difficult operation since he attempted to push the mower at the same time. Naturally, I put one hand on the mower so that he would have a little more freedom of action. That was my mistake. As soon as I touched the mower, Pappy immediately used two hands to light his cigarette and I, necessarily, used two to push the mower to keep up with him, since he had continued walking. It took me maybe five minutes to realize that that scoundrel had no intention at all of relieving me of the task he had tricked me into. I mowed the rest of that entire lawn while he furnished the conversation. At that point I realized that if my children, when they came, took after their Grandpa, I didn't have too much to worry about.

Way back then, J. J. P. had a shock of beautiful white hair. Looked just like Senator Bob

LaFollette of Wisconsin whom some of you folks may recall. Now, on his 92nd birthday, he still has a beautiful shock of pure white hair and he looks fine, yet different. The passing years have been kind and, as is so often the case, they have refined the edges, so to speak, and the old gentleman now has an inner beauty that literally shines through. The aged have no need for sham.

He had himself quite a party. There were twenty-five guests at the dinner, of whom only three might have been labeled contemporaries. Let's face it, at 92 you have mourned the passing of your contemporaries a decade or more ago. And so it was with the last of the O'Briens. As he sat at the head of the table, you could tell he missed seeing too many of the old timers who, for a very pressing and permanent reason, could not be present. His mobile face reflected his thoughts. The saddened twinge for departed friend would be replaced by an errant smile as he looked at his kids.

Looked at his kids who used to chamber about him. Now, these same kids range from early forties to mid-sixties. Then he would let his eyes drift down the table and a bit of puzzlement would cross his face. This look was occasioned by the in-laws the grand-children have brought into his family. He must have felt like that Chiefton of C'an in the old days. There he sat, appraising the newer edition of his Tribe. No longer was it the proud Scotch Irish of his own mother and father. No longer would only the tales of the Gaels be told. The C'an had become Americanized. In his own family, the Germans had crept in. Now, the new generation had brought in the French and the Italians and the Poles. His face showed acceptance of the change.

The party was the first time all of his kids had been assembled in some thirty-five years. All of them paid a tribute to the Boss but Blanche came up with a poem that could only be described as a Thumb-nail Biography, she wrote a poem of praise that she read and the results were two-fold. When she finished, an Irishman would have said "There was not a dry eye in the room and everyone had a "teddible first" Handkerchiefs sufficed to correct the first and there was a sufficiency of waiters with libations to correct and relieve the second.

Someone, seemingly, had made a rule that none of the "in-laws" could make a tribute to Pappy and that was a mistake because I feel certain that myself and others could and would have given the old Gentleman a fine and sincere commendation because of the love we have built for him over the years. J. J. P. O'Brien would have known that he is an example, par excellence, as the French put it, of why there has never been a



Letter To Editor

Editor
The Yancey Record
Burnsville, North Carolina

Dear Editor:

Enclosed for your review is a copy of a booklet we have prepared for high school seniors in the 11th Congressional District showing sources of scholarship and other financial assistance.

It is my sincere hope that the information offered in the booklet will aid many students in solving the financial problems associated with their future college or technical training. You will notice that the publication is especially tailored to meet the needs of North Carolinians by putting them in touch with sources of financial assistance within their own state. Of course, national programs are also covered.

I am mailing a copy of the booklet to every high school senior in the 11th District, approximately 6,200 in all. Copies are also being sent to all high school principals, libraries, counselors and to all colleges in the District.

If you can use extra copies, please let me know. Naturally, I would be very happy should you wish to call attention to this publication in your newspaper.

Sincerely,
Roy A. Taylor
Member of Congress

Scripture Cake

- 1 cup Judges, 5th Chapter, 25th Verse
- ¼ cup 1st Kings, 4th Chapter, 22nd Verse
- ¾ cups Jeremiah, 6th Chapter, 20th Verse
- 2 cups Samuel, 30th Chapter, 12th Verse
- 1 cup Genesis, 24th Chapter, 17th Verse
- 2 teaspoons 2nd Kings, 23rd Chapter, 15th Verse
- 6 Isaiah, 10th Chapter, 14th Verse
- Pinch of Leviticus, 2nd Chapter, 13th Verse
- 1 tablespoon Exodus, 16th Chapter, 31st Verse
- ¼ teaspoon each of 1st Kings, 10th Chapter, 10th Verse
- Follow Solomon's advice for making a boy good
Proverbs 13th Chapter, 24th Verse

M. J. Troxella 1966

father-in-law joke. Pappy has never, during the 27-plus years I have known him, been anything other than helpful, so — God Bless him and if he wants another 92 years which I doubt, I hope he gets them.

North Carolina School Boards Offer Proposals For School Improvement

By: Joan Page

CHAPEL HILL — Some concrete proposals for improvement of public school education in the state were offered here October 26 at the 13th Annual Delegate Assembly of the North Carolina State School Boards Association.

Around 450 school board members, district and advisory committee members, superintendents and principals attended the day-long session on the University of North Carolina campus. The theme of the program was "Education Today for Tomorrow's Tasks."

In his keynote address to the educators, Chancellor John T. Caldwell of N. C. State University said the United States "is a long way from realizing a goal of universal and equal education for all."

Caldwell called on school board members to use their positions to help achieve equality of educational opportunity in the state.

The public schools, Caldwell said, should provide every individual an opportunity to develop his own unique capabilities and should focus attention on the whole of a child's make-up and not just his academic ability.

The school, he said, "is society's most hopeful instrument for improving the human condition and the human outlook."

Faster and more radical consolidation of school districts and city and county schools may be required if equal educational opportunity is to be assured for all in the state, he added.

"Equality of educational opportunity may lead to schemes of salary adjustment and alteration of class size to make teaching in the more remote areas of the state and in the more remote schools more attractive to the better teachers," he said.

"The most productive nation on the globe can afford an adequate educational system. The real question is whether we believe in these things," Caldwell declared.

"The people are going to pay one way or the other. They are either going to pay for a truly adequate system of education or for dwarfed lives in the form of unemployed and frustrated people living in poverty and delinquency."

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction Charles F. Carroll addressed the group. He called for a state minimum salary schedule for teachers within the range of \$6,000 for college graduates without experience to \$11,000 for teachers with 20 years' experience.

"To those who say all teachers are not worthy of a salary of this sort, I say that unqualified, incompetent teachers should not be employed in the first place. The vast majority of teachers are deserving of compensation commensurate with their duties and responsibilities and the majority should not be penalized by weaknesses of the minority."

Carroll further recommended fringe benefits for teachers and other school personnel, more effective utilization of present personnel, and up-to-date, in-service education for teachers required to teach out of their fields of preparation.

Turning to the subject of teacher militancy, Carroll defined a militant person as one "aggressively active in a cause."

Rather than have militancy evolve into sanctions or strikes, Carroll suggested that teachers, school board members, administrators and lay people work together to "channel this aggressiveness in behalf of a good cause into highly productive channels and purposes."

As a means of getting zeal and energy in support of an improved program of public education, he advised school board members to formulate and adopt policies covering personnel, employment, grievances, agreements and related subjects.

"The need for all county and city boards of education and administrators to review personnel policies is imperative," he said.

"The efforts and co-operation of all persons affected should be brought into the reviewing process with the idea of producing policies that recognize the rights of all parties. There is need to spell out more clearly the duties and responsibilities of people in each category of service — professional and non-professional."