

1965

Thursday, May 6th

Was a busy Spring day. After breakfast with Lyndon I worked with Bess, dashed in to Garfinckel's with exactly 5 minutes to buy a black patent purse, and then made it to the Shoreham for the Congressional Club brunch, a high point of the year, the annual big day of the Congressional Club, which I have been going to since 1938.

As I pulled up to the entrance, Mrs. Alvin O'Konski, the Republican Chairman, and Mrs. Chet Hollifield, her Democratic Co-chairman, met me at the entrance with conductor's hats on and great big grins. That set the tone of the day! They had used the Lady Bird Special as the theme of the brunch. Each table was centered with a toy train engine, gay with a little red and white canopy, a bird perched on the top of it.

The Marine Band was playing Chattanooga Choochoo and later The Yellow Rose and, of course, Hello, Dolly. And all of the audience -- this time there were a thousand, more than I ever remember -- was in a party mood. I'll bet at lots the tables there were some good reminiscences of those unforgettable four days last October. Never was there such a campaign venture. And for this theme to have been thought of by a Republican Chairman and O.K.'d by all the Republicans on the

1965

Thursday, May 6th (continued)

Board, is somehow especially delightful. Committee members had an artificial bird pinned on their shoulder.

All the Cabinet was there, and I think about seven of the Court, and if I had worked on it I would have called it a great success. From where I sat, it was. The decorations, the entertainment, Sergio Franke of Do I Hear a Waltz, Mrs. Kunkel's (the President) smooth presiding, the visitors with eyes out on stems from everybody's home town, and, most of all, the mood of the party, gay and bubbly.

With the two tickets they had given me for the girls, I had invited Mrs. Emmet Redford and Mrs. Barefoot Sanders. All those years in the House and Senate, how I used to hoard my tickets and parcel them out to my very favorite constituents. And then, standing in the hall, hoping that I would at least get close enough to a Cabinet or Court wife to introduce my constituents.

So when I went in, in the well-staged manner, last of the guests of honor, to the blare of music and on the arm of a very erect red-coated Marine, I tried to look from right to left at all the Congressional Club members with their very special guests, with a smile that said it was special to me too.

One small catch. The spotlight was so blinding I couldn't see anybody. My gift was truly special. It was the original of the cartoon

1965

Thursday, May 6th (continued)

of the Lady Bird Special train drawn by Fred Sebol, the one that appeared on the cover of the breakfast program. This is for my own Archives. Also, they gave me a train engine. And the table decorations they sold handily for \$5.00 apiece!

If I looked like I was having an extremely good time, it was exactly because I was, and I know something of all the work that goes into these brunches.

When it was over I met Mrs. Warren Magnuson, Jane Freeman, and Mrs. Garrett, and we drove out to the Arboretum, where the azaleas are at the height of their glory and the dogwood is still beautiful. In spite of all my years here, I had only been to the Arboretum once before, and that since I got to working on beautification. And I fear that's the case with many Washingtonians. It is very close to the heart of the city and very beautiful, but it is little known. I had the guided tour by experts, the three ladies themselves and Dr. Skinner (I believe it is) who is in charge. I had never heard of the educational and research program that they have and the services that they make available -- the Botanic Gardens, Experiment Station, Garden Clubs, and nurseries -- but I did worry that there wasn't

1965

Thursday, May 6th (continued)

enough real use by the public. It would have been wonderful to see busloads of school children having a field trip, walking along the lovely sylvan paths, learning to identify the holly and magnolia and crepe myrtle and hibiscus and camellia, and the incredible rainbow hillsides of azaleas.

Actually, who should I see walking down a path but Mr. and Mrs. Walter Lippman, she in shorts and leading a great big Poodle. The perfect use for that day and that place!

The garden clubs have been the great benefactor and sponsor of the Arboretum, and I am glad that I got to go, but I did feel uneasy that it wasn't incorporated enough into the life of the city.

Back at the White House I had a session with Governor and Mrs. Paiewonsky of the Virgin Islands, with Liz and Buzz joining us, in order to learn something about the college<sup>to</sup> whose first graduating class I am going to make a little speech ~~to~~ in June. I was amazed to learn that there are only 40,000 people in all the Virgin Islands and that they sometimes have as many as 10,000 tourists on a busy ~~Season~~ day.

I had asked Abe and Carol to come over and discuss with me the final disposition of Mrs. Johnson's album. We decided that we would recommend that we go on and publish it, omitting the parts (some wills, some profiles) about eight in all, that are offensive

1965

Thursday, May 6th (continued)

as we try to look at ourselves with fresh eyes, and some other parts that are just plain dull. We have gotten the third letter from Lucia, saying it's all right to publish it, and Abe has wrapped up his final conversations with Mr. Gutwilig.

Abe and Carl<sup>o</sup> stayed for a potluck supper, and Lyndon brought the Valentis. It was an hilarious evening. Lyndon got strung off on telling Johnson City stories of his youth, like the philosophical conversation between the boys who said, "How would you like to be an old wagon wheel, turning over and over?" and the one who, after thinking a while, answered, "I'd rather be that than have a big post-oak tree for a watch fob."

And humorous Crider stories about Governor Pa Feguson and "Black Dan" Crider and Jeff Crider. And about Ben, who said, "I'll watch the car." He enjoys them just as much as his listeners do. It is a part of his therapy for relaxation.