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Build the Palace of the Future, May 26, 1974

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BUILD THE PALACE OF THE FUTURE
TEAYS VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL
MAY 26, 1974

G. R. BOWERS
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT - INSTRUCTION

IF I HAD ONE WISH, I WOULD WISH THAT EACH OF YOU COULD STAND HERE TO VIEW THIS MAGNIFICENT PANORAMA OF A HIGH SCHOOL COMMENCEMENT, PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OCCASION IN ANY COMMUNITY. THE HOPES...THE ASPIRATIONS...THE DREAMS PORTRAYED BY THE 1974 GRADUATING CLASS OF TEAYS VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL--AS THEY ASSEMBLED HERE THIS EVENING--RAPIDLY ERADICATE THE GLOOM...THE NEGATIVISM...THE DESPAIR OF THE HEADLINES IN THIS MORNING'S, YESTERDAY'S, LAST WEEK'S AND LAST MONTH'S NEWSPAPERS.

ALTHOUGH THEY LOOK MUCH THE SAME IN THEIR CAPS AND GOWNS, YOU--PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND FRIENDS--MAY BE ASSURED THAT, UNLIKE THE PRODUCTS OF MASS PRODUCTION, THESE GRADUATES ARE EACH UNIQUELY AND INHERENTLY DIFFERENT. THE DIPLOMA THEY ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE IS THEIR ONLY COMMON DENOMINATOR.

THEY ARE THE PRODUCTS OF YOUR HOMES, SCHOOLS, AND CHURCHES. THEY HAVE EXCELLED SCHOLASTICALLY, IN ATHLETICS, IN MUSIC, ART, DRAMATICS, AND MANY OTHER EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

MOST HAVE FAR EXCEEDED THE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION. YOU CAN BE JUSTIFIABLY PROUD OF THE ROLE THE SCHOOL HAS HAD IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT. SO, TOO, CAN YOU BE EXTREMELY PROUD OF YOUR ROLE AS THEIR PARENTS AND FRIENDS.

FOR WHAT THESE GRADUATE ARE--THAT FOR WHICH THEY STAND--FOR THE POTENTIAL THEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED, LET'S GIVE THEM A BIG HAND.

NOW...GRADUATES, TWELVE YEARS OF EDUCATION DIDN'T JUST HAPPEN. THE PEOPLE MOST INTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THIS EVENING'S OCCASION POSSIBLE HAPPEN TO BE IN THIS AUDIENCE. THEY ARE YOUR PARENTS, YOUR FRIENDS, YOUR RELATIVES, YOUR TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS AND BOARD OF EDUCATION. I THINK THAT YOU, TOO, SHOULD SHOW AN ABUNDANT APPRECIATION TO THOSE WHO MADE POSSIBLE THIS COMMENCEMENT.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS AGO, I WAS PRIVILEGED TO BE ONE OF TWENTY-ONE GRADUATING FROM A HIGH SCHOOL THAT IS NO MORE, A HIGH SCHOOL WHICH USED TO BE KNOWN AS ASHVILLE-HARRISON. LOCATED JUST ACROSS THE FIELD.

FORTUNATELY, COMMUNITY LEADERS SAW THE WISDOM OF JOINING WITH WALNUT AND SCIOTO TOWNSHIPS TO PROVIDE FAR BROADER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH A CONSOLIDATED DISTRICT THAN ANY ONE OF THE THREE COULD HAVE PROVIDED ON THEIR OWN.

WHILE COMPLETELY SUPPORTING YOUR MOTTO, "THE POOREST OF ALL MEN IS A MAN WITHOUT A DREAM," I HAVE TO ADMIT I NEVER DREAMED THAT I WOULD BE SPEAKING TO A COMMENCEMENT ASSEMBLAGE REPRESENTING MY ALMA MATER. I AM DEEPLY HUMBLLED BY THE OCCASION AND AM GRATIFIED FOR THE OPPORTUNITY OF BEING ABLE TO SPEND THIS EVENING WITH YOU.

WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL, WE WEREN'T ALLOWED TO SPEAK TOO MUCH ON OUR OWN. WE HAD A LOT OF SPEECH CONTESTS, BUT THEY WERE MEMORIZATIONS OF SOMEBODY ELSE'S WRITING. I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY WAYS OR HOW MANY TIMES WE PRACTICED THE ELOCUTION...THE ORATION... "YOUR FUTURE LIES AHEAD!" I AM NOT CERTAIN WHERE ELSE IT COULD LIE, BUT I KNOW THAT WE COULD SHOUT IT FROM THE ROOF TOPS, TOGETHER WITH A PLETHORA OF OTHER AGE-OLD WISDOMS THAT HAD BEEN CAST IN THE FORM OF SPEECHES.

THIS AFTERNOON I TOOK A WALK THROUGH THE ASHVILLE PARK, SEPARATING MY OLD HIGH SCHOOL FROM THIS ONE, TO REMINISCE...TO RECOLLECT...SOME OF THOSE DAYS AS A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT. I HADN'T WALKED VERY FAR WHEN I FOUND MYSELF IN THE OUTFIELD OF A LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL GAME. MY REFLECTIONS WERE SHATTERED BY THE CHATTERING OF THE NOISIEST LITTLE CENTER FIELDER I HAVE EVER OBSERVED. "PUT 'ER IN THERE, BABE; STRIKE HIM OUT; LET'S GO; BRUSH HIM OFF; DUST HIS LID; STRIKE HIM OUT; COME ON BABE, LET'S GO." THIS ENDLESS CHATTER CONTINUED INCESSANTLY TO THE POINT I FINALLY HAD TO ASK THE BOY, WHO COULDN'T HAVE BEEN IN MORE THAN THE FOURTH OR FIFTH GRADE, "WHAT'S THE SCORE?" HE LOOKED UP AT ME WITH INNOCENT EYES AND SAID, "WE'RE BEHIND, 16 TO NOTHIN'." I SAID, "MY, YOU DON'T SEEM VERY DISCOURAGED ABOUT THAT." AND HE SNAPPED BACK, "HECK NO, MISTER, WE HAIN'T BEEN TO BAT YET."

WELL, MEMBERS OF THE 1974 GRADUATING CLASS, "YOU HAIN'T BEEN TO BAT YET," EITHER. BUT TOMORROW, THE UMPIRE IS GOING TO CALL "PLAY BALL!" WHEN YOU TAKE THE BAT AND STAND IN THE BATTERS BOX, YOU STAND ALONE. YES, YOUR FRIENDS, RELATIVES, PARENTS AND TEACHERS CAN SIT IN THE STANDS AND CHEER YOU ON, BUT ONLY YOU CAN TAKE THE SWING. TODAY'S PITCHER IS PRETTY TOUGH. HE CAN PUT MORE ON A BALL THAN HAS EVER BEEN PUT ON BEFORE, THE SCREWBALL, SLIDER, ET. AL.

DON'T THINK IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, HOWEVER. IT WAS THIS YEAR...1974...THAT THE ELUSIVE, BUT INEVITABLE, 715TH HOMER WAS HIT BY HANK AARON, BREAKING A RECORD SET 39 YEARS EARLIER BY THE BELOVED "BABE." THIS MONTH, THE NINE SECOND, 100 YARD DASH WAS RUN. IN FACT, 51 OF THE 54 MEN'S WORLD TRACK AND FIELD RECORDS, AND 24 OF THE 26 WOMEN'S WORLD TRACK AND FIELD RECORDS, HAVE BEEN SET SINCE YOU ENTERED THE FIRST GRADE. THEY HAVE BEEN SET TO BE BROKEN.

WHETHER YOU BUNT, HIT A SINGLE, DOUBLE, TRIPLE, HOMER, OR STRIKE OUT DEPENDS PRIMARILY UPON HOW WELL YOU HAVE PREPARED, CONTINUE TO PREPARE, AND REMAIN IN CONDITION FOR A MOST FANTASTIC GAME OF LIFE, AT LEAST HALF OF WHICH SHOULD BE SPENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

NO ONE KNOWS CLEARLY WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS. TODAY, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE MOST OF US CARE TO REMEMBER, WE ARE AT PEACE WITH THE WORLD AND MOST OF THE WORLD IS AT PEACE WITH ITSELF. WE HAVE SEEN ENDLESS TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS THAT VIRTUALLY BOGGLE THE MIND'S COMPREHENSION. WE HAVE SEEN SOCIETY URBANIZE WITH AN INCREASINGLY, LONELY ANONYMITY.

WHILE A FEW OF YOU CAN STILL ENJOY THE BEAUTY, THE QUIET, THE SOLITUDE OF A RURAL LIFE STYLE, FOR MOST OF YOU TOMORROW WILL BE UNLIKE TODAY, AS THE FUTURE COMES CRASHING IN AND ABOUT YOU.

I WAS REALLY SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT ONLY 50 PERCENT OF YOU HAVE ATTENDED SCHOOL IN TEAYS VALLEY FOR TWELVE YEARS. I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HIGHER. AND YET, THAT 50 PERCENT REPRESENTS A GREATER DEGREE OF STABILITY THAN IS ENJOYED IN MOST COMMUNITIES TODAY. FOR CERTAIN, YOUR LIVES WILL BE MARKED BY AN INCREASING MOBILITY UNKNOWN EVEN TODAY. WITH THAT MOBILITY COMES AN ABSENCE OF MANY PERMANENT THINGS TO WHICH MOST OF YOU ARE ACCUSTOMED.

"BARBIE," A TWELVE-INCH PLASTIC TEEN-AGER, IS THE BEST KNOWN AND BEST SELLING DOLL IN HISTORY. SINCE ITS INTRODUCTION IN 1959, THE BARBIE DOLL POPULATION OF THE WORLD HAS GROWN TO 12,000,000--MORE THAN THE HUMAN POPULATION OF LOS ANGELES OR LONDON OR PARIS. LITTLE GIRLS ADORE BARBIE BECAUSE SHE IS HIGHLY REALISTIC AND EMINENTLY DRESS-UPABLE. MATTEL, INC., MAKERS OF BARBIE, ALSO SELLS A COMPLETE WARDROBE FOR HER, INCLUDING CLOTHES FOR ORDINARY DAYTIME WEAR, CLOTHES FOR FORMAL PARTY WEAR, CLOTHES FOR SWIMMING AND SKIING.

RECENTLY MATTEL ANNOUNCED A NEW IMPROVED BARBIE DOLL. THE NEW VERSION HAS A SLIMMER FIGURE, "REAL" EYELASHES, AND A TWIST-AND-TURN WAIST THAT MAKES HER MORE HUMANOID THAN EVER. MOREOVER, MATTEL ANNOUNCED THAT, FOR THE FIRST TIME, ANY YOUNG LADY WISHING TO PURCHASE A NEW BARBIE WOULD RECEIVE A TRADE-IN ALLOWANCE FOR HER OLD ONE.

WHAT MATTEL DID NOT ANNOUNCE WAS THAT BY TRADING IN HER OLD DOLL FOR A TECHNOLOGICALLY IMPROVED MODEL, THE LITTLE GIRL OF TODAY, CITIZEN OF TOMORROW'S SUPER-INDUSTRIAL WORLD, WOULD LEARN A FUNDAMENTAL LESSON ABOUT THE NEW SOCIETY: THAT MAN'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH THINGS ARE INCREASINGLY TEMPORARY.

AND SO IT IS AND SO IT WILL BE, THOSE MATERIAL POSSESSIONS ONCE SO CHERISHED BY AMERICANS ARE RAPIDLY DISAPPEARING. WE CAN NOW LEASE OUR LIVING QUARTERS, OUR FURNITURE, OUR DRAPERIES, OUR CARPETING, OUR DISHES, OUR AUTOMOBILE, AND, YES, THROW AWAY PAPER CLOTHES ARE NOT FAR AWAY. BUT MAN HAS ALWAYS NEEDED ATTACHMENTS. ATTACHMENTS TO A PLACE, TO THINGS, AND TO OTHER PEOPLE.

HEREIN YOU FACE PERHAPS THE MOST
FORMIDABLE CHALLENGE THAT HAS EVER BEEN
THRUST UPON MANKIND FOR SOLUTION. I REMEMBER
ANOTHER OF THOSE MEMORIZED SPEECHES WHICH
CLOSED WITH THE ADMONITION, "WE HAVE LEARNED
TO SWIM THROUGH THE SEA LIKE FISH. WE HAVE
LEARNED TO FLY THROUGH THE AIR LIKE BIRDS,
NOW LET US LEARN TO WALK THE EARTH LIKE
MEN."

THAT WAS WRITTEN, AND I SPOKE THOSE WORDS,
BEFORE THE ADVENT OF THE NUCLEAR-POWERED
NAUTILUS SUBMARINE, IT WAS BEFORE JOHN GLENN
ORBITED THE EARTH, IT WAS BEFORE NEAL ARMSTRONG
TOOK THAT "MIGHTY STEP FOR MANKIND" AND YET.
I MUST ADMIT TO YOU THAT TODAY WE ARE AS FAR,
OR FURTHER, FROM LEARNING TO WALK THE EARTH
LIKE MEN THAN WE HAVE EVER BEEN IN THE PAST.

THE RULES FOR DOING SO, I THINK, HAVE BEEN VERY CLEARLY ESTABLISHED IN THE FORM OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE GOLDEN RULE. ALL TOO FREQUENTLY TODAY, THE GOLDEN RULE IS MISINTERPRETED AS, "DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU THINK OTHERS DO UNTO YOU." THE COMMANDMENTS ARE VIEWED AS NICE SUGGESTIONS FOR THE OTHER GUY, THE SQUARE. AND YET, THERE REMAINS WITHIN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE GOLDEN RULE SUFFICIENT GUIDANCE TO PERMIT MAN TO WALK THE EARTH LIKE MEN. IF YOU ARE TO ENJOY THE POTENTIALITIES OF A MOST SATISFYING LIFE STYLE, IF YOU ARE TO CAPITALIZE UPON THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF TECHNOLOGY, IF YOU ARE TO LOOK FORWARD WITH HEADS HELD HIGH UPON ENTERING THE THIRD CENTURY OF THE OLDEST REPRESENTATIVE REPUBLIC IN THE WORLD, THEN IT WILL BE BECAUSE YOU HAVE DECIDED THAT THE OLDEST OF RULES ARE INDEED MOST ADEQUATE FOR MODERN TIMES, THAT THERE ARE SOME ETERNAL VERITIES. JUST LIKE THE LAWS OF NATURE.

REGRETTABLY, SOME PEOPLE THINK OUR FORM OF GOVERNMENT CAN SURVIVE WITHOUT A FIRM BELIEF IN OUR MOTTO, "IN GOD WE TRUST," THAT IT CAN PERPETUATE ITSELF WITHOUT KNOWLEDGEABLE AND CONCERNED ACTIVE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION.

THIS NATION IS UNDERGOING ONE OF THE LONGEST CLEANSING PERIODS IN ITS HISTORY, FROM CERTAINLY ITS MOST SCANDULOUS HOURS. WHILE THE WASH CYCLE HAS BEEN LONG, AND THE WATER HOT, IT IS INCREASINGLY APPARENT THAT THE ROOT CAUSE HAS BEEN OUR OWN APATHY, EXPRESSED BY THE ATTITUDE, "LET GEORGE DO IT." CROOKED POLITICIANS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ELECTED BY "GOOD" PEOPLE WHO HAVEN'T TAKEN THE TIME TO TO CARE.

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE CORRUPT INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL SEEK TO HOLD THE REIGNS OF POWER, THE DANGER LIES WHERE THERE AREN'T ENOUGH PEOPLE AROUND WHO ARE INVOLVED ENOUGH TO STOP THEM.

WITH THE RATIFICATION OF THE 26TH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, YOU...AS 18 YEAR OLDS... HAVE BEEN ENFRANCHISED TO VOTE. THROUGH LEGISLATIVE ACTS, ADULTHOOD HAS BEEN ACCORDED, ON THE FIRM BELIEF THAT THE MATURITY AND JUDGMENT OF TODAY'S 18 YEAR OLD IS SUFFICIENT...IS ADEQUATE...TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE IMPORTANT AFFAIRS OF THE COMMUNITY, THE STATE, AND THE NATION.

EXERCISE THAT STATUS, THE NEW ENFRANCHISEMENT, WISELY. BECOME INVOLVED. BE KNOWLEDGEABLE. IT'S YOUR LIFE. IT'S YOUR GENERATION.

AS YOU JOURNEY FORTH ON THE 'MORROW, THE WORDS OF THE GREAT FRENCH SCIENTIST... MADAME CURIE, THE NOBEL PRIZE WINNER FOR DISCOVERING RADIUM WHICH THRUST THE WORLD INTO THE STILL MYSTERIOUS FIELD OF RADIOACTIVITY...MAY BE HELPFUL. BEFORE THE FRENCH ACADEMY OF SCIENCE, SHE SAID, "BUT NOT ONE OF US CAN DO MUCH, YET EACH OF US, PERHAPS, CAN CATCH SOME GLEAM OF KNOWLEDGE,

WHICH MODÉST AND INSUFFICIENT OF ITSELF, MAY
ADD TO MAN'S DREAM OF TRUTH. IT IS BY THESE
SMALL CANDLES IN OUR DARKNESS THAT WE SEE BEFORE
US, LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE DIM OUTLINES OF THAT
GREAT PLAN WHICH SHAPES THE UNIVERSE. AND I
AM AMONG THOSE WHO THINK THAT FOR THIS REASON,
SCIENCE HAS GREAT BEAUTY, AND WITH ITS GREAT
SPIRITUAL STRENGTH WILL IN TIME CLEANSE THIS
WORLD OF ITS EVILS, ITS IGNORANCE, ITS
POVERTY, DISEASES, WARS, AND HEARTACHES.

LOOK FOR THE CLEAR LIGHT OF TRUTH,

LOOK FOR UNKNOWN NEW ROADS,

EVEN WHEN MAN'S SIGHT IS KEENER FAR
THAN NOW, DIVINE WONDER WILL NEVER
FAIL HIM,

EVERY AGE HAS ITS OWN DREAMS,

LEAVE, THEN, THE DREAMS OF YESTERDAY,

YOU--TAKE THE TORCH OF KNOWLEDGE

AND BUILD THE PALACE OF THE FUTURE."