

March 6, 2018

Wow! Spring cleaning my desk this week and shredding mountains of old papers, bills, taxes, personal material, and other minutia, I came across a few things that I wanted to preserve... for me, if not for my children and grandchildren. The trips down "Memory Lane" were excruciatingly painful at times, and at other times, lifted me to the mountaintops.

With the recent passing of the beloved long time Virginia Delegate, Bob Purkey, a folder from February 1996 containing my diary from a week in Richmond, having worked in the General Assembly on Delegate Purkey's Legislative Staff, and a subsequent "Letter to the Editor" I wrote, which was published as an Op-Ed in *The Virginian-Pilot* that March, suddenly caught my eye. Reading it all again brought back so many names, faces, and memories, that I felt I wanted to preserve it. I have made it into a PDF and will post it to my website and will link it to my Facebook albums for safekeeping.

Many in the area who are close to my age will recognize so many names, if they read it. It is also a very fitting tribute to a man who was a trusted friend, mentor, and pillar of the community and state. Bob Purkey was a tireless servant for us all, even if we didn't always agree with him.

Being a Democrat myself who was working for a week with in a Republican Delegate's office, and also being a very young, single woman, the experience was memorable on many levels. I will include my private (until now) diary, my "Letter to the Editor", and Bob's comments about its affect in Richmond. The diary was written for me at the time, and is simply a daily review of all of the people and events of each of the five days. Read at your own risk. (Smile)

In addition, I have not created the Friday Follies or posted to my website in ions! With the advent of Facebook years ago, it really gave everyone a "website" to use, and my website and the Friday Follies fell by the wayside. Judiwithani.com is extremely primitive and outdated, and many of the links are broken or do not work anymore, but it is still a place I can post PDFs and then link what I want to other social media. It is fun for this "mature" mind to try to navigate all of this technology the way I used to do it intuitively.

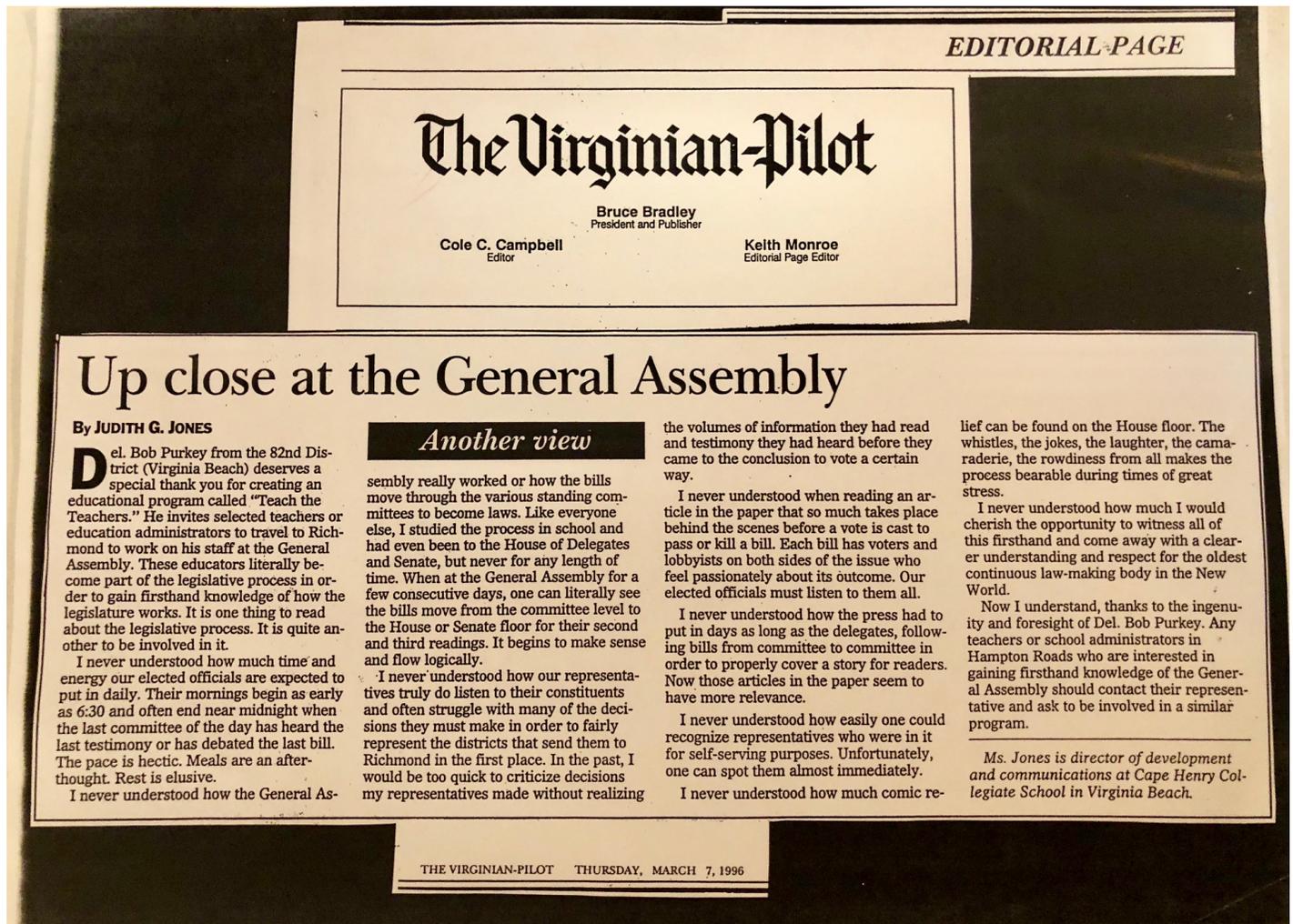
Many of you will find no interest in these ramblings at all, but you may find the "Letter to the Editor" of interest, especially in these interesting political times. Many of you who are Virginians will probably see numerous names you recognize, and it may be fun for you to see some of the remarks.

Thanks for indulging me.

Judi Greenhaw (Jones) Godsey

Once home from Richmond, having worked in the General Assembly for a week in February 1996 on the Legislative Staff of Delegate Bob Purkey, I wrote thank you notes to everyone I had met, and sent a "Letter to the Editor" to *The Virginian-Pilot* as a public thank you. It was published as an Op-Ed in *The Virginian-Pilot* on March 7, 1996.

The day it was published, Bob Purkey called from Richmond to say that copies had been made and distributed to every Senator and Delegate at the Capitol, and it was going to get statewide coverage. It made me very proud.



Up close at the General Assembly

By JUDITH G. JONES

Del. Bob Purkey from the 82nd District (Virginia Beach) deserves a special thank you for creating an educational program called "Teach the Teachers." He invites selected teachers or education administrators to travel to Richmond to work on his staff at the General Assembly. These educators literally become part of the legislative process in order to gain firsthand knowledge of how the legislature works. It is one thing to read about the legislative process. It is quite another to be involved in it.

I never understood how much time and energy our elected officials are expected to put in daily. Their mornings begin as early as 6:30 and often end near midnight when the last committee of the day has heard the last testimony or has debated the last bill. The pace is hectic. Meals are an afterthought. Rest is elusive.

I never understood how the General As-

Another view

sembly really worked or how the bills move through the various standing committees to become laws. Like everyone else, I studied the process in school and had even been to the House of Delegates and Senate, but never for any length of time. When at the General Assembly for a few consecutive days, one can literally see the bills move from the committee level to the House or Senate floor for their second and third readings. It begins to make sense and flow logically.

I never understood how our representatives truly do listen to their constituents and often struggle with many of the decisions they must make in order to fairly represent the districts that send them to Richmond in the first place. In the past, I would be too quick to criticize decisions my representatives made without realizing

the volumes of information they had read and testimony they had heard before they came to the conclusion to vote a certain way.

I never understood when reading an article in the paper that so much takes place behind the scenes before a vote is cast to pass or kill a bill. Each bill has voters and lobbyists on both sides of the issue who feel passionately about its outcome. Our elected officials must listen to them all.

I never understood how the press had to put in days as long as the delegates, following bills from committee to committee in order to properly cover a story for readers. Now those articles in the paper seem to have more relevance.

I never understood how easily one could recognize representatives who were in it for self-serving purposes. Unfortunately, one can spot them almost immediately.

I never understood how much comic re-

lief can be found on the House floor. The whistles, the jokes, the laughter, the camaraderie, the rowdiness from all makes the process bearable during times of great stress.

I never understood how much I would cherish the opportunity to witness all of this firsthand and come away with a clearer understanding and respect for the oldest continuous law-making body in the New World.

Now I understand, thanks to the ingenuity and foresight of Del. Bob Purkey. Any teachers or school administrators in Hampton Roads who are interested in gaining firsthand knowledge of the General Assembly should contact their representative and ask to be involved in a similar program.

Ms. Jones is director of development and communications at Cape Henry Collegiate School in Virginia Beach.

What follows is my private (until now) diary from those exceptional days in Richmond.

Day One In The Virginia General Assembly

February 1996. Snow, sleet and freezing rain canceled the Monday trip of the Hampton Roads Educational Leadership Academy (of which I am a participant) to Richmond. I deliberated as to whether or not to make the trip myself and Joan Ryan, Bob Purkey's aide, had called to say that if I wanted to postpone to another week, I could. I knew, however, that since we had just launched a new capital campaign at Cape Henry Collegiate School, and since a special Board of Trustees' meeting had been scheduled for the following week, this was the only window of opportunity I had.

I arrived in Richmond around 5 p.m. Sunday and was amazed at how clear the roads were. All of that scare, and the roads, even though narrower than usual, were perfectly clear. I had given Allison Giardano, a page in the Senate, a ride to the Omni and was pleased to find that my hotel, the Berkeley, was literally across the street. I checked in and settled in my room, ordered room service and got a good night's sleep before the week's activities.

I arrived at the General Assembly Building (GAB) at 9:45 a.m. and went directly to Delegate Bob Purkey's office. Bob was in a meeting and Joan Ryan had not yet arrived from Virginia Beach. The receptionist greeted me, made me feel welcomed, and introduced me to Henry O'neil, an intern from Virginia Union who had been working in Purkey's office since January 10th.

Henry, about 19, was very soft spoken and shy, but soon opened up when he found that I knew nothing about the process and was simply there to learn. He took great pride in showing me the daily calendars, agendas, and in teaching me which ones had passed which readings at the committee level.

Henry told me he had never been to an Assembly session because he usually had to leave at 11:00 and return at 3:00 due to college classes. I told him he had to make an effort to see one soon so he could appreciate all that he had been doing. (Henry had been sitting in on committee meetings and had helped to revise bills that he had never seen come up for discussion on the House Floor.)

Later that day when Bob returned from his committee meeting, I pulled him aside and told him of the discussion I had had with Henry and how helpful he had been. Bob invited Henry to go along to the Assembly again, and for the first time, Henry went along to a Session. (I watched him in the back of the room as he beamed.)

On the way to the Session, I heard a young voice yelling my name. I turned around and there stood a bundled up young girl. It took me a second to recognize her, but Anne Calvert Kelsey had heard I was at the GAB and had charged over in the cold to say hello.

During the General Assembly, Bob Purkey came over several times to check on me and to explain some of the bills and procedures that were taking place. He was also very candid about his opinions of the personalities of the other Delegates as they spoke.

Bob was never rude, nor was he trite, but it was obvious he takes his responsibility very seriously and can tell you which Delegates have their hearts in it and which ones are there for self-serving objectives. It was odd, but his comments and my impressions coincided perfectly.

I may not always agree with him, but Bob is a good and smart man. He is the type of politician that does not care what political party a person is affiliated with. He is simply concerned about their integrity and sincerity.

During that afternoon, I was also flattered that as I sat there and took notes, Bob Tata, Bob McDonnell, Frank Wagner, Leo Wardrup, and Glen Croshaw all came over, sat down and talked for awhile saying how glad they were to have me spending the week at the Assembly. It was really very touching. (I watched as Leo, Tata, and Purkey were interviewed by the press in the back of the Chamber. It was interesting to see those reports in the paper the next day.)

Also, one of the things Bob McDonald came over to tell me was that the study he Patroned and that Dan Richardson was interested in (inspired by the personal situation with Betsy) came out of the sub committee last night and should move through the House and into the Senate next week. I assured him that I would pass that word along to Dan.

After the Session, Bob and I walked through the Capital and over to the Senate to say hello to several people. Then he took me back to his office and introduced me to Kay Kemper, the Vice President of Development for Old Dominion University. It was obvious that the two of them were close friends and shared many similar interests. Kay was very intense, delightful, and obviously was extremely knowledgeable. She invited me to stop by Senator Walker's office to see what she does, and I will definitely take her up on that later in the week.

I went through the mail and messages that had accumulated while we had been in the Session, and then went to the Hampton Roads Caucus. Drew Langford had stopped by Bob's office, recognized me from the Democratic breakfasts in Virginia Beach and asked to go with me to the caucus. At the meeting, I visited with Irv Hill from Cox Cable, Senator Quayle, Delegate Thelma Drake, and Martha McClees, the Lobbyist from the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce. The meeting conflicted with numerous other committee meetings, so it was extremely brief.

I then went to two other Sub Committee meetings before joining Bob Purkey at 6:15 at the Finance Committee Hearings. On the way to these meetings, I ran into two very good friends that I haven't seen in a while, Jim Dyke, former Virginia State Secretary of Education, and Mike McIlwain, Jim Chapman's Campaign Manager for his US Congressional race.

Jim Dyke is now representing the Richmond area as they try to secure a professional athletic team. I told him that as of last week, he has a whole new area to worry about with the newly formed commission being set up to promote Hampton Roads for the same purpose. He grumbled and said he knew. We were both on the run, but said we would touch base later in the week and try to go to dinner.

Mike McIlwain is in the area doing some lobbying until he launches his next campaign. We also agreed to get together later in the week to "catch up".

I sat in the Finance Committee meeting and watched Bob Purkey pass the tax exemption status for Chesapeake Bay Academy. He was thrilled later to find out that I knew the people that we going to be affected and asked that I let Mary Ann Dukas and Allen Rashkind know.

After the Finance Committee, Bob and I decided to skip the receptions and go straight to dinner with Kay Kemper at the Frog and the Redneck. Kay and her roommate were about 45 minutes late, so Bob and I had a good chance to talk with no one else around. He confirmed my feelings that he truly is a good hearted and intelligent man.

If the first day is any indication of what the rest of the week is going to be like, I am in for a week to remember...always. I wouldn't take anything for this experience.

Day Two In The Virginia General Assembly

On the humorous side...

Today was rather uneventful except for one outstanding moment on the House Floor.

I arrived at the GAB at 9:15 after a vigorous walk through the ice and snow, uphill I might add. It was much worse today because the sun had thawed some of the snow yesterday, and the cold last night froze it again. I found it was much easier to climb up the hill beside the Capital than to try to take the icy stairs. Apparently from the tracks, others had found that route more appealing as well.

Bob had already gone into a meeting, and Henry was not going to be in the office today. Around 9:45 Joan and I went upstairs for some breakfast. Mayor Oberndorf was at the first table as we entered the cafeteria and, of course, she didn't have a clue (once again) who I was. (I'll bet I have met and had conversations with that woman no less than fifty times!)

While Joan stopped to speak with the Mayor, some lobbyist for the tobacco industry that I saw in there yesterday stopped me and said he wanted to introduce me to Delegate Riley Ingram who had asked him who I was when I entered the cafeteria. The tobacco guy was obviously trying to tease the Delegate, and ended up embarrassing himself! It was funny. The Mayor was oblivious to it all.

After breakfast I went back to the office and was asked to write a resolution for the Virginia Power workers. This commendation will be presented on the House Floor tomorrow. I read the front page story of the Virginian Pilot, pulling out facts and information for the resolution. There wasn't much to work with, but I tried to "spruce it up" as much as possible. (see below)

Bob came in and asked me if I wanted to walk over for the start of the session with him, but I said I would follow after I finished writing the resolution. I went upstairs and grabbed a sandwich and then walked over to the Capital Building. The Session was already in progress.

I went into the gallery and sat on the right hand side as Bob had told me so he would be able to get my attention and motion for me to come down to sit behind him. The gallery was not crowded at all today and I decided I liked being out of the cameras' way and would stay up there today.

About that time I noticed Glen Croshaw had wandered up to Speaker Moss's Stand and was asking him a question. Once he got his answer, he turned and saw me sitting in the gallery, and from the Speaker's Stand, waved to me. Tom Moss tapped him on the shoulder and they exchanged a few words. (Reading lips comes in handy from time to time.) Tom asked Glen what he was doing waving to me since he didn't know me. Glen said, "I do know her." Tom said, "No you don't". Glen said "Yes I do. That's Judi Jones." Tom asked Glen if I was married, and Glen said no. With that they BOTH turned and waved with big, stupid grins on their faces.

By this time everyone in the House and in the gallery was looking up and over at me. It was hilarious!

Glen walked off and I turned back to recording the motions from the Floor. The next thing I knew, Glen was climbing through the pews of the gallery to sit next to me. He climbed over, sat next to me and grinned, "Now wave at Tom. He doesn't believe I know you." Again, the entire House of Delegates turned to see what was going on. Glen invited me to come sit on the Democratic side of the House with him. I thanked him, said I would love to take him up on it another time, and would certainly feel more comfortable on the Democratic side, but that I was quite happy right where I was, and that I wasn't sure what Bob Purkey would think of that since I was working for him this week. Glen went down, whispered something to Bob Purkey, they both glanced up and waved, and we all had a big laugh.

One last note on this subject. The session was going on and on and since the more interesting debates were over, I decided to leave. I gathered my things, and as I was leaving the gallery, I looked back and Tom Moss was pouting, shaking his head, and mouthing from the Speaker's Stand, "Don't Go!" It was all I could do to keep from laughing until I got out in the corridor.

There were some interesting debates on the floor today, even with all of the kidding going on. HB 579 Patroned by Frank Wagner on Random Drug Testing in the Schools and HB 1491 Patroned by May and Mims on Steeplechase Licenses got rather lengthy and heated before they were finished. Bob Purkey's HB 599 relating to the State Council on Local Debt and the State Treasurer got through the second reading with no debate.

The contrast between the Senate and the House is dramatic to say the least. The House gets a great deal passed, but they cut-up, whistle, yell cat calls and tease each other constantly. There are often bursts of good-hearted laughter sprinkled throughout their sessions. The Senate is very stuffy, formal, and dignified. They usually finish in half the time it takes the House, but they don't seem to enjoy the process as much.

Once I left the House proceedings, I took a few quiet moment to walk through the Senate side and the Senate Gallery. Then I found myself in the Old Senate Chamber. It is truly awesome. The huge painting of George Washington and his troops is incredible. You can feel Thomas Jefferson's presence in the room, along with the generations and generations of law maker that have shared that space. I always love to go stand in that room when no one else is around.

Once back at the GAB, I looked up Ed Schrock's office and went by to leave him a note. I will try to catch up with him later. Dennis Vest had a message he wanted me to give him. I tried to find Tom Moss's office so I could go by and give him some grief, but he was not listed on the directory. Then I figured that he and the Clerk probably have their offices in the Capital Building. I will have to check on that tomorrow.

There was very little going on in the office because Bob left right after the session and drove back to Virginia Beach to deliver a speech to the Virginia Medical Association at the Ramada Inn. I decided to skip the receptions after work and head back to the Berkeley to get some paper work and reading done, order room service and, once again, go to bed early.

Day Three In The Virginia General Assembly

I arrived at the GAB at 8:15, once again, ice and snow and slipping and sliding all the way up the hill. I found a walkway on the way home yesterday that had been cleared. Once I got to the Capitol's hill, it was much easier. That was great since today I decided to bring my computer to the office. The past two days have been very full, but there were a couple of "down" times that I could have used my computer to get caught up. Climbing the hill, though, I was wondering why I brought it because it was getting heavier with every step.

I'm glad I brought now. Every time I get a few minutes, I run in and get a few things typed up. It is wonderful not to be at the receptionist's mercy (or on her nerves asking her to type things up.)

Henry came in, but we were so busy that we hardly had a chance to talk. When Bob came in, we had a chance to talk and he said the speech went very well last night. There were 75-100 doctors present for his speech. He seemed pleased. He explained to me his thoughts on doctors and how they have painted themselves into a corner.

Doctors never wanted to bother with the legislative process. They always thought they were above it. They would hire one lobbyist for one bill and the next year they would hire another, and so on, and so on. He said that is why they have never had a voice in the process. They are really being overlooked and passed over on many of the bills and studies that are being presented. Optometrists and Ophthalmologists have lobbyists, and while I was there, I heard at least two bills being debated on the floor regarding their professions. It is truly amazing to see it all really work.

When I mentioned to Bob Purkey that I might try to locate Tom Moss today to say hello and introduce myself, he said he didn't think that would be a good idea. He said Tom is going through some personal problems at home at the moment and to keep my distance. I was a bit disappointed because I thought the joking yesterday was in good fun. Apparently, Tom Moss was semi-serious when he asked Croshaw if I was married. Others even told me he was asking questions. Oh well...so much for just cutting up and having a good time.

My first task this morning was to create a charting system on the progress of the bills for which Purkey is Patron. Once I finished that, I set up my computer and entered the same data onto a data sheet, showing Purkey's office staff how to set one up and track it on a print out every day as well as on the posters. They loved it. (Little did I tell them that I was doing it so I could reproduce it for my ODU graduate paper.) All agreed that the posters are still very useful to lobbyists and guests as well as to the interns.

I ran upstairs to grab a sandwich (where did all of these people come from?) and then scooted over to the Assembly. I wanted to get there for the start of it today. The gallery and the halls of the Capitol were extremely crowded today. I guess the snow and ice kept many people from visiting the Capitol until today. There were many tour groups and student tours. It took fifteen to twenty minutes in the Assembly for the delegates to introduce all of their guests in the gallery and even so, many of the visitors had to sit

downstairs in room 4. The doormen rotated the groups so that everyone got a chance to sit in the gallery. Maybe it was just my imagination, but the delegates seemed to be showboating a bit more today. There were also numerous TV camera crews in the corridors and five or six newspaper photographers on the floor.

The session was very short today, but the debates were fierce, and there were many bills I found interesting. Once the Session was over, I walked over to the Senate and made arrangements to go back at noon tomorrow to observe.

Back to the office and Anne Calvert came by to visit. It was so good to see her. She is such a sweet heart. I wish Jessica would be interested in this. With all of the contacts, she would be almost a shoe-in. Bob even offered earlier in the week to have Jessica come up next year. I will have to think about it. I really don't think she could keep her grades up.

Next I went down to the Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns, looked around and left. I went into the General Laws, and it was packed. They were going to be discussing Riverboat Gambling, the BPOL tax, etc. so it promised to be an interesting meeting. Just as I had climbed into a seat and gotten settled, Joan came in and said she needed me to go cover the Finance Committee for Bob because he was tied up in another meeting. Ugh!

I went over to the Capitol House Room 4 and was pleasantly surprised. They were discussing the addition of Keno to the state lottery. There were many statistics and comparisons to other states, and then a discussion ensued as to whether it would be better to adopt Keno or Multi-State Lotteries. It was extremely interesting listening to how Mrs. Kyle calculates the estimates of what a particular gambling game will bring in in revenues for the state.

Following that, the discussions got exceedingly repetitive and boring. As soon as Bob arrived and I briefed him on the bills that had been presented and where his stood on the agenda, I gathered my things and slide out the back door. OOPS! Literally bumped into Don Beyer. He is soooo attractive!

Back at the office, Allison Giardano and a friend had stopped by and also Mike McElwain. Once again he didn't leave a number where I could reach him. Mike asked Joan where I was, and she gave him directions and said he went out to find me. She didn't realize that I was sitting in the next office updating the Legislative tracking chart. Oh well, if he really wants to see me, he will find me.

I just had a funny discussion with Frank Wagner re: Mike McElwain. Frank's office is on the same floor as Bob's and I knew he knew Mike...but I just wasn't thinking! When I asked Frank if he knew how to get in touch with Mike, he said, "No, but when you find him, please bring me his heart!" All of a sudden it dawned on me that Mike is the one that crucified Frank in the Republican primary against Jim Chapman for Owen Pickett's Congressional seat!

I asked Frank if he cared what type of platter it was on, gold or silver, and we laughed. Frank said he knew I was perfectly capable of bringing him Mike's heart even in the

romantic sense. He got into the whys and wherefores, and I told him I stayed out of that kind of stuff, that Mike and I had disagreed a great deal during Chapman's campaign, and that even though I didn't support Chapman, we all remained friends. Frank said he knew that about me, and he was convinced that is why I will probably be President someday, to please not ever run against him. Then he gave me grief for dating J.P. for such a long time...something I could have done without.

It is odd, though. Being here with so many of the people I met through J.P. makes me feel strange at times. Sometimes I actually think I miss him...but it passes quickly!!

It was a late night. At 6:30 Bob came in and said he wasn't going to make it to the receptions with Joan and I. I gave him the paperwork and files on the bills he needed for the next committee, messages from lobbyists, and then Joan and I caught the shuttle to the Radisson to freshen up and check messages. Then we went to the Downtown Club at the River Front Plaza (Beautiful!!) for a reception provided by the Social Securities group. Great food and atmosphere, but none of the Senators or Delegates were there. Most of them were still in Committee Meetings.

From there we went to the Holiday Inn for a reception provided by the Seafood Industry. It was great! As the night wore on, there were many, many delegates and Senators that arrived, also, most of their Aides. Linda Harding, who used to be a secretary at Cape Henry Collegiate School was there. She's now an Aide for a Freshman Delegate...I can't remember who...Morgan? Anyway, it took her a second to recognize me, but when she did, it was funny. It was nice to see her.

I went over to speak to Leo and he introduced me to Delegate Jack Reid from Richmond. We hit it off and talked for quite a while. He was a public school Principal outside of Richmond for years before running for the House. (Very attractive and interesting man...why are the ones I find intriguing always married?)

Then I saw Ed Schrock and went over to say, "Hello." He always seems genuinely pleased to see me. That's such a nice feeling. His aide, Rob, was there and remembered me from days with J.P. Ed and I talked for a long time, and I told him I would wave at him from the Senate Chamber tomorrow. He invited me to come to the Health and Education Senate Committee in the morning. Said it would be exciting. Too early, though, I don't think I will.

Then I went to get some food and Leo intercepted me and we went over to a table of Republican Staff members for Senators and Delegates, all male, of course. (All single, but also all about 25-30 years old) We had a nice discussion and lots of laughs. Jack Reid came back over and joined us. He seems to be a very sincere type of person. I have watched him in the assembly. He sits and listens, and when he finally speaks, the entire House moves to a vote. Sort of the E.F. Hutton type.

Before I knew it, Jack, Frank Wagner, Leo and Senator Russell Potts were all at the table. Before long, many of the other guests were hanging around our table listening to the stories, and the people from the Seafood Industry were coming up and asking to be introduced. Obviously, we had a fun table. I thought it was curious, though, that Joan didn't join us until later in the evening when the crowd had thinned out. Maybe since

she is an Aide, it wasn't appropriate for her to sit with the Senator and Delegates. I never asked her.

Russell told many tall tales and kept us all in stitches. He used to be the Assistant Athletic Director for the University of Maryland and also had some major role with the some pro baseball team. (Was it Chicago? Can't remember.) He went on and on about how proud he was to be ranked the lowest Senator on the "Pat Robertson Polls."

Even though all of these fellows are Republicans, it surprised me how much disdain they have for the Christian Coalition! They really all seemed very moderate. (Probably why they are all such good friends with Glen, who by the way, many of them say will be Governor Croshaw someday!)

It also tickled me that all of them were seriously "on me" the whole night about running for office. Russell said he thought I ought to get busy and go after Senator Walker's seat, that that was the weakest link in the chain. We both agreed, though, that timing is everything. They all said I ought to think about becoming a Republican since they are in power at the moment. We got into some very philosophical discussions, and as the free drinks kept flowing, they all got more candid with their stories, and thoughts and opinions on things .

It is funny. When you sit and talk with the young male aides, all they can talk about is politics and what neat stunts their bosses have done with resurrecting bills, etc., but when you talk with the politicians, they mostly talk in generalities and not so much about what they have done. They also talk about other things, not just politics. Much more interesting!

I swear, if I had the money, I would think about running for some office eventually. After seeing all of it first hand, I have no doubt that I could do it and be very good at it...all of it. Not conceit, just fact.

As we were leaving I stopped to talk with Glen. He and Delegate Heilig were leaving the same time we were. Glen is truly very well respected by everyone in Richmond.

Russell, Leo, and I dropped Joan off at the Radisson, and then they dropped me at the Berkeley. Leo and Gloria have rented an apartment down on Tobacco Row, so it was on his way. I really had a wonderful time talking to all of these guys and listening as they finally relaxed and told story after story after story. Very nice and enlightening evening.

When I got back to my room, I don't know why, but I called J.P. to tell him what a wonderful time I was having and to thank him for introducing me to so many of these guys. We had a really nice, long talk, and as I was hanging up, he said and asked at the same time, "Well, have a great week and I'll talk with you when you get back?" I said, "No, J.P., I don't think so. I just called to thank you." He didn't say anything. I said "Good night." and hung up. Even though it was well intentioned, I'm sorry now that I did that...

Day Four In The Virginia General Assembly

Arrived at the GAB at 8:30. Had a few things at the hotel to take care of first. It was rainy and cold, but not much ice left, so the walk was easy. I am aware of just how out of shape I am, though. I got set up and then went to get coffee and read the paper.

This School Board stuff at the Beach is amazing. What a mess! It should help CHCS, though. I think if I worked in the public school system, I would be having a fit if they suggested I work for a week without pay. I mean, it just doesn't seem fair to punish the staff. They didn't create or cover up the shortfall. Why should they be required to pay the price?

Joan came up and visited. The receptionist, who has been, not cold, but distant, decided to be nice to me today. She actually came in and sat down and asked me questions about what I do. She was also very curious about my laptop. She said she used to work at St. Catherine's here in Richmond, so she was familiar with independent schools. Ever since that conversation, she has gone out of her way to be nice to me.

The morning was extremely uneventful. There weren't any Committee Meetings that I was particularly interested in, so I just stayed in the office and got some work done. Bob came in and, as usual, was very charming. We are supposed to go to dinner tonight with a whole group of people, but I looked at his calendar and he has a 7:15 Committee Meeting, so I don't know if that will work out.

Mike McElwain had called and left a message that he is a Legislative Aide to Senator Bolling on the 3rd floor. I guess I misunderstood him the other day when I thought he was a lobbyist. Maybe I'll go down and see him today. I also need to pack since I will have to check out by noon tomorrow. I think I'll just let them store my luggage and pick it up at 4 after tomorrow's session. I wish I could stay through the weekend. With this being cross-over weekend, there are bound to be some very heated Committee Meetings Saturday.

The press core came in while I was having coffee, and one of the local anchormen that I met last night (Richard somebody from channel 4 or 6 or something) came over to speak. He said they didn't get in until 1:00 last night - painted the town. Today is his 41st birthday, so they are all going out to celebrate again tonight. He wanted to know if I wanted to join them. I said, "Thanks, but I have plans." He and a local anchorman from Virginia Beach (who shall remain nameless) came over as we were leaving the reception last night and started talking. Russell and Leo and Joan all whisked me away and told me later in the car that they are bad news. (no pun intended) Big time womanizers. Ha! I guess they thought I was going to be impressed with them or something. Actually, I thought they were kinda sleazy. It was nice that they felt they needed to warn me though!

I walked over to the Senate Chamber with Bob around 11:45. He said since his schedule had changed, he and some others were going to run out and get a quick bite between meetings, and if I wanted to come along, I was welcomed to. He also said he understood that I have friends in the area and not to feel badly if I changed my plans.

He is so sweet. What a great mentor. I am going to have to think of something special to get him after this. I will definitely write a letter to the editor.

The Senate Gallery was already very crowded and the doorman pulled out a folding chair for me. It was in the back and was not elevated, plus the Senate Chamber being so small, I literally couldn't see anything except Lt. Gov. Don Beyer...but that was ok. He is sooo gorgeous! (By the way, his suite is next door to mine at the Berkeley!)

After the introductions, a woman in front of me left, and I took her seat. I still couldn't see much, but it was better. I could, however, see Ed. His twitch seemed much worse than usual. I guess it gets worse when he is nervous. A lot of the interns say he is very ineffective so far. They say it is almost embarrassing. Leo and Jack were saying how uptight he is, that he gets so irritated and upset about things. Maybe he will ease into it after awhile.

On the other hand, everyone I talked with loved Thelma Drake. Said she was no nonsense and learned quickly. I really don't know her well at all. I have just had a few conversations with her at the "beach".

I stayed for several of the bills. The one on the blue crabs went on forever. Even though it is an important topic for our area, the Senators that were debating were not very impressive and certainly were not good orators. I decided to go eat and then go back to the House because it is so much more interesting.

I went to "Chickens" and got a grilled cheese and bacon, yum, and even that got very crowded with a couple of tours. I didn't want to go to the floor because I wanted to be able to leave when I wanted, so I walked up to the House gallery where the doormen now know me, and they went in and cleared a seat in the press area for me. (So cool!)

The House was really acting up today! Even on serious bills they were cutting up. At one point Tom Moss looked up at me. I flashed him a big grin and he laughed. He motioned to me to come down on the floor and I mouthed, "No thank you."

About five minutes into it, Mike McElwain came in and sat next to me. It was good to finally see him. We've been missing each other constantly. We talked for a long time. I told him about Wagner's funny comments, and he almost died with laughter. (It reminded me of sitting in the balcony at church and getting tickled and trying to be quiet.) Frank Wagner looked up and saw us and shook his finger at us. We waved. He smiled. Politics is so strange!

Mike and I decided we would go to a couple of the receptions with some of his friends. Then he said that that Richard (anchor man) guy was supposed to be having a big birthday party down at the "Slip" if I wanted to go. Ha! I told him no thanks. He said good, that all that guy does is sit around and talk about all of the girls he has "dated."

Mike went back to work and I went back to the office to finish up. I told Joan I was going to leave early and go back and pack since I didn't think I would get another chance. I guess it was about 3:00. I knew Bob would be there until 6:00 at least and she had planned to leave early, too. Joan said she would see me at the reception later. It is

amazing, but she says she and the other aides go to two or three receptions a night. That is how they all eat while they are working the Session.

Mike called at five and said they would pick me up at six. I was packed, so I went down stair to have a drink in the bar while I waited. Funny, but that was the first time I went in the restaurant or bar since I checked in on Sunday. It was totally elegant... fine wines, cigars, mahogany paneling. The chef is a world-class chef, and he and the chef from the Frog and the Redneck (who is also Jerry's friend from the Coastal Grille) just got back from a catering a party Tuesday night in New York City. A few weeks ago they catered a party in Paris.

Mike picked me up and the two other guys were Lars (I met last night and still can't pronounce his last name) who is an aide with Delegate Guess and Gordon Dixon (I don't remember who he is with). We went to the reception at the Marriott provided by some Health Organization. It was nice, but in a huge room and not very crowded. We stayed for a while and then decided to go to dinner at Havana's.

We trudged through the snow (raining now) and had a wonderful meal. Lars is one of the funniest human beings I've ever met. He looks 22, but is, in fact, 33. He apparently comes from a great deal of money, but he loses it all on the horses. He is hooked on the races. They told stories about their bosses and campaigns, and legislation, and then they started in on some personal stories.

We all ordered cigars and puffed away. They laughed because they said the table next to us was pointing when I lit up. I showed them all how you are not supposed to thump your ashes on cigars, but let them get as long as you can. Lars said he was getting dizzy but thought the "buzz" was from the butane. (He kept having to light his cigar because it kept going out.)

After dinner we took Lars home. He lived in the most beautiful neighborhood on the South side. It reminded me of Ghent except they were all individual houses and not the traditional brownstones. I would die for one of those old places.

Gordon's car was at the Capitol so we dropped him off, and Mike and I went to the Tabacco Company for some music and a nightcap. It was the first chance Mike and I really had to talk. Of course he wanted to know all about why I had stopped seeing J.P. (I refused to give him any details) and then we talked all about the problems he is having with his girlfriend. When I saw him this past fall he was in love and ready to get married. Anyway, the poor boy doesn't get out too much, because he was amazed at all of the young and beautiful girls in the place. He could hardly talk he was so distracted. It was funny.

We were sitting by a pillar so people walking by really couldn't see Mike. Several times men would come over to speak, and as they got closer, they would see Mike sitting there, make a face, and walk off. I laughed, but I really do hate those types of places!

We walked across the street to my hotel and Mike wanted to see the music video of Karen Banach. He promised to bring it back the next morning, so he waited in the lobby while I went up to get the tape. When I returned, he got so excited because Don

Beyer had walked in while I was upstairs. I told him I knew that because he lives there during the Session and his suite is right next to my room. He didn't believe me, so I walked him back across the street and made him look up at the top floor. I showed him how the Lt. Gov.'s balcony and mine join. He thought that was really cool. Oddly enough, I never saw Don once at the hotel.

Another day, gone. I hate to see this week go by so fast. I am having such a good time, and I'm learning so much at the same time.

Day Five In The Virginia General Assembly

OVERSLEPT! I woke up at 7:15 and my alarm had been going off for an hour and 15 minutes. (I miss my AT&T message service!) I didn't bother to request a wake up call because I had been getting up to the alarm clock all week just fine. But then again, last night was the latest I've been out all week. Plus I am just plain exhausted from the week's activities. Luckily I packed yesterday. I rushed around and called the bellhop to store my bags, checked out, and was at the GAB by 8:30.

Purkey was not as stressed today as usual. They met last night until 12:15, so he was tired, but only had one Committee Meeting before the Republican Caucus at 11:30. He did however have a ton of messages to return, and the morning was filled with lobbyists stopping by. Both interns, Henry and Chris, were in today so I got a chance to say goodbye to them.

Bob came in my office and sat for a long time and talked. A lot of the things he said were very flattering and pleased me. We promised to get together for dinner and talk politics as soon as the Assembly is over. He said he loves to go to Williamsburg to the Trellis and wanted to take me soon. He said he has some things he wants to discuss with me...hum! I wonder what it could be.

I went upstairs to the 6th floor conference room for the Rules Committee Meeting. (Bob said it was going to be a good one today.) I got there early, but still couldn't get a seat. There were tons of faces I knew around the conference table, and some I didn't recognize. I had to stand in the doorway, and even with my hearing aids, I couldn't hear anything! It got frustrating, so I walked down the hall to the cafeteria. Bob was there, picking up his breakfast to take back to the office, so he bought me a cup of coffee. I sat and read the paper, and as I left, said goodbye to cafeteria worker that had been so sweet to me all week. He was always smiling, shaking his head, and complimenting my suits.

When I got back to the office, Allison Giardano finally caught up with me and had brought three of her friends to meet me. One of them was a young man that must have weighted 300 pounds. He was the "Head Page." Nice kids. It really meant a lot to me that she and Calvert went out of their way several times to come by to see me. I think they just liked seeing a familiar face. Also, I think it is something they know we share that they couldn't possibly explain to their friends back home. They just wouldn't understand. Allison was not really looking forward to having to stay for cross-over, but Greg and Shelly are coming up Saturday to see her.

About this time Henry came and got me and said that I had a phone call. The message said it was Cindy Bouquard and I noticed it was a Virginia Beach number. I couldn't imagine what she wanted. It turned out she had read somewhere that I was on Bob Purkey's staff, and she wanted to tell me that HB 1364 was coming up before the House Finance Committee today (Bob sits on that Committee). She wanted me to tell Bob that she knew he was against it, but could he please just be neutral when it came up. We talked about the ramifications and the fact that it would mean a 2% tax increase for the people in Virginia Beach to subsidize public transportation. She also told me she knew that I was working on a couple of the Chamber of Commerce Committees, and that this bill went right along with their package. I am not to sure about that and will have to check.

Anyway, it was kinda neat to have someone call and specifically request to talk with me about it. When Bob got a break, I went in his office and told him about the conversation and he went into a fifteen-minute explanation of why it is bad for Hampton Roads citizens. Then he made me a bet. He said when I sit down to pay my taxes at the end of the year, to total up all of the taxes, federal, state, and all of the others. He bet me a dinner that they would total 42-43% of my total earning. Then, of course, he got off on other things. (He does have a strong tendency to do that)

Now it was time to go to the General Assembly. I got my stuff together and went over a bit early just to watch them all enter. Plus, I thought I had missed Bob leave because I didn't see him in the office when I left. All of the Republicans had on beautiful red, white, and blue ties today. It looked pretty neat.

The Assembly was very crowded. I still didn't see Bob. When Leo and Bob Tata came in, they checked with the doorman to see if there were any seats. There was one left and they motioned me in. Just as I got in the door, the doorman (Spec, the one that is so mean) said it was reserved for a member of the press. I said that was fine and went upstairs. Spec did call upstairs, however, and told them to put me on the front row, which is reserved for the families of the Delegates.

The session was rather short and most of the interesting bills they let "go by" today. When it was over, Frank Wagner and Glen Croshaw walked back to the GAB with me. Frank and I talked about him having to stay up there this weekend, but that it would be ok because his mother lives in Arlington and is very ill. Susie is coming up to go visit her with him. We started talking about how they met, and he said a couple of really funny things. He is very witty. Glen and the others at the GAB shook my hand and told me how nice it had been to have me there this week. I think they could all tell how much I enjoyed it.

I went up and said goodbye to everyone. Bob and I said goodbye during the morning because we knew we might not see each other again. As I was leaving the building, I ran into Jim Dyke. He looked very tired. He said it had been a grueling week with lots of late meetings. He asked if I wanted to go to dinner and I told him I was heading back. We promised to try to get together fairly soon.

I picked up my car and headed out at 2:30 to avoid the heavy traffic. As I left the area, I drove around South side for a while just to see it again, then headed back to the "Beach".

Now I have to turn my attention to this week's special Board, the marketing meeting, and the immediacy of the Capital Campaign...and *Soundings*...There is always *Soundings* looming in the back of my mind. I had hoped to get some of this work done in Richmond, but little did I know how busy every minute would be. In a way, it will be good to get back, but in a way, I am going to miss it very, very much. It was a spectacular opportunity, and as I said on Monday night when I wrote my diary, I wouldn't take anything for it.

Next step, pull out all of the stuff I collected and write it all up for my graduate course at ODU...