

# 1305

**“It’s Great to Be Alive and Living in Lynchburg—Today”**

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**By Robert C. Wood III, Esq.**  
(See the page following for Mr. Wood’s vita)

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Sphex Club  
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Robert C. Wood, III

It's Great to be Alive and Living in Lynchburg - Today

The phone rings in the office of our city manager, Kim Payne.

"City Manager's Office."

"May I speak to Mr. Payne?"

"Who may I say is calling?"

"John Lynch."

Silence for a moment. Then Sherrill, Kim's secretary, says, "Does Mr. Payne know who you are?"

"I hope so. I'm the founder of the City of Lynchburg."

An awkward silence.

"Where are you calling from?"

"I'm calling on my cell phone from the BluffWalk. Its quite a nice place - best place I've ever stayed. Mr. Craddock appreciates the city's support."

Another awkward silence.

"Just a moment, please."

"Kim, I have a man on the phone who says he is John Lynch, the founder of the City of Lynchburg. He's calling from BluffWalk."

Silence. "Sherrill is this a joke? It must be some lunatic who wants to complain about my management style, which I know is very aggressive, but I think it is working with those prima donna members of City Council who I have to handle with kid gloves. Tell him I'm busy, and I can't talk."

“Mr. Lynch, Mr. Payne says he is busy and can’t talk to you.”

“When can I call back?”

Silence. “I don’t know.”

“Well, tell him, I’ve been away from the city for over 200 years, and I’d like to catch up with what’s gone on in Lynchburg since the date of my reported death on Oct. 3, 1820. I hope he will give me a few minutes to discuss our great city. I might even give him some free advise on how to manage the city, I thought I did a good job of it after the General Assembly issued Lynchburg a charter in 1786.”

Sherrill is dumbfounded. She thinks to herself: this guy’s got to be a nut. She dials Kim again: “Kim, this man won’t go away; he says he has been away for 200 years and wants to catch up on what’s been going on in the city and maybe give you some free advice.”

Kim frets: “I suppose I can use free advice considering all the money the city pays for these so-called expert consultants, who don’t know more than I do. What the hell, put him on.”

“Kim Payne speaking.”

“Kim, this is John Lynch. I know you know who I am, but you probably didn’t realize that I’m alive and well and have been living in the City of Lynchburg for the past year, but nobody has noticed me. And I’m not the bozo muscleman who hangs out at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Main St.”

Silence.

Kim stammers, “John, may I call you John?”

“Certainly.”

“How do you expect me to believe that you are John Lynch, the founder of our beloved city who has been dead for almost 200 years, and now Sept. 26, 2007, you are calling to tell me

that you are alive; you want to discuss Lynchburg's past and present with me and give me some free advice? And you're calling from BluffWalk. How can you afford BluffWalk? Are you out of your mind – some crazy person?"

"Kim, I have plenty of money. I'm withdrawing from my IRA that I've had invested in my Credit Union for over 200 years. Believe it or not, I get Social Security and Medicare. I've got my Social Security card. It was easy. I just gave a clerk in the Social Security office my name, address and year of birth. Anyway, no one thought I was crazy when I started my ferry at the bottom of Ninth Street hill in 1757. Everybody was enthusiastic about my successful effort to incorporate my forty-five acres that I gave to create the City of Lynchburg in 1786. And everybody was pleased when I donated the land for the old Lynchburg Cemetery. Just ask Jane White how grateful she is for that. And I also donated the land in 1857 to expand the cemetery. I also donated the land for our courthouse. Everybody thought I was a good businessman when I opened a tobacco warehouse in 1785, and added two more tobacco warehouses in 1791. I think my efforts contributed to the startling statistic that by 1859 Lynchburg had the second highest per capita income of any city in the nation. I think a lot of that can be contributed to my efforts in Lynchburg."

Kim responds, "Well, that might be true Mr. Lynch, but I understand that you were wily enough to draw the boundaries of the City of Lynchburg to keep your ferry and your tobacco warehouses outside of the city limits."

"That may be true, Kim, but that's just good business planning. The founder of Lynchburg doesn't like to pay taxes anymore than its residents, past and present. You might remind your council members that. Good sound businessmen don't like to pay taxes. That is

why so many businessmen get elected to council, and the state legislature, with their “read my lips” campaign pledge: “No New Taxes.”

“Okay, John, just tell me where you have been for 200 years?”

“Well, you may have heard of transhumanism. Since Adam and Eve, there has been the eternal quest for immortality. I loved Lynchburg so much that I did not want to die. So I elected to have my body placed in cold storage, quite a novel idea in my first life. It is now known as cryonics. It was like being Rip Van Winkle and the Great Budha at the same time. You might say that for the last 200 years, I’ve been asleep in a place Budha calls Nirvana, where one is free from the burning passions of desire, jealousy, greed and there is an absence of ignorance. You are in a state of a constant bliss. There are no taxes, no debts to settle, just, well, you might say everyone is enlightened.

“Kim, I know you have heard of nanotechnology. Well, I’m a byproduct of this emerging science. I’ve been repaired and restored. You will see that I look pretty good for a man born in 1740, and I am enlightened. From my present experience I have not met anyone who is truly enlightened, but I might and that is why I want to meet you; you have certain qualities of enlightenment Mr. Payne, which I admire.”

Unfazed by the apparent compliment Kim answers: “Well, you might be crazy, John, especially if you think I am enlightened. I know nothing about nanotechnology, but you have piqued my curiosity enough to want to meet with you. May I invite our mayor, Joan Foster, and our vice-mayor, Bert Dodson. More than two, I’d have to publicize the meeting under that absurd Freedom of Information Act. You are aware of the Freedom of Information Act, aren’t you?”

“Well yes, but I never paid much attention to it during my...uh, before my reawakening. I do know a little bit about it now, and I know the newspapers are constantly harassing you to open every executive session to the public.”

“Well, that’s true. The News wants the Council to interview candidates for the school board in an open session; have you ever heard anything so crazy. The public might know what the candidate really thinks about education and our school system. Anyway, I’m going to call Joan and Bert. Why don’t you plan to meet me in my office tomorrow, Sept. 27, at noon. We can have lunch, and we can talk about anything you want, past or present.”

“Thanks, Kim. I’ll look forward to our meeting. Do I need a security clearance to get in your office? These days its hard to go anywhere in public without being searched, screened and harassed. A public security officer, who was old and fat, made me take off my shoes before I could use a public toilet at the City Market. May I bring my laptop? I may want to take some notes.”

Silence. “You have a laptop?”

“Sure, doesn’t everyone have a laptop now?”

“Well, all city council members have a laptop but most of them don’t know how to work them. Anyway, I’ll see you tomorrow at noon.”

Later that day.

“Joan, this is Kim, you’re not going to believe this, but I just talked with John Lynch, who says he’s the founder of our city, and he wants to meet with me to discuss our city’s history and give me some free advice. I want to include you and Bert in the meeting. Can you attend?”

Silence. “Kim, have you been smoking the wacky weed?”

“No, but I may sound like it. Anyway, can you be here at noon tomorrow? If he’s a crackpot, we’ll get rid of him in short time. If he is John Lynch reincarnated or whatever, it could be a fascinating afternoon. “

“I’ll be there.”

Later in the day, “Bert, this is Kim. I just received a call from John Lynch, the founder of our city, and he wants to meet with me tomorrow at noon. Can you attend?”

Silence. “I know you think I associate with a bunch of loonies and left-wing radicals since I’m a Democrat, but I haven’t completely lost touch with reality. You must be kidding.”

Kim: “No, I’m not kidding, Bert. I’ve agreed to talk with a man who says he is John Lynch, who founded our city, who says he’s been asleep about 200 years in a place called Nirvana, has been restored to life through nanotechnology, and is living at BluffWalk . He wants to come and talk with me about Lynchburg, its past and future and give us free advice. Can you attend?”

Silence. “Well, an exterminator never turns down an offer to control pests and other varmints, and this may be my first chance to exterminate one who only has two legs. I’ll be there tomorrow at noon.”

Noon the next day, Sept 27,2007.

Joan and Bert arrive at Kim’s office around 11:55, both look very sheepish, like this has got to be a huge practical joke. They are perplexed and ruminating: John Lynch is alive and well in the City of Lynchburg, a man known for his honesty and forthrightness, a good Quaker. A smart and enterprising businessman who nonetheless set his slaves free; a beacon of hope in our country’s pursuit for racial equality. If this guy’s an imposter, he’s certainly claiming good bloodlines.

The phone rings in Kim's office. "Kim, John Lynch is here to see you."

"Sherrill, bring him in."

The door opens and there is an elderly-looking gentleman, who is tall, standing remarkably erect. His hair is gray, he is clean-shaven and he's dressed in drab-colored pants and shirt with a broad-brimmed hat he removes as he enters Kim's office.

"I'm glad to meet you, Kim, Joan and Bert. I feel like I know you even though we've never met."

An awkward silence. Kim is a bit flustered. "How do you feel like you know me, Joan and Bert?"

"Because when I returned after my long absence from the city, my nanotechnologist, a really smart guy from Central Virginia Community College, told me to read the News & Advance (which was really a good newspaper until Bob Wimer retired), and to read two books about Lynchburg. The First Two Hundred Years by Lynchburg's esteemed historian, James M. Elson, who I understand is a member, as you are, of that very distinguished club, The Sphinx Club. I'd sure like to attend a meeting! And secondly, Darrell Laurant's book, A City Unto Itself. I found them both fascinating reading. I know now why I can truthfully say, "It's great to be alive and living in Lynchburg today." A sly grin emanates from the wrinkles around his mouth evidencing a cheshire-like smile.

"Well, we certainly agree with that, don't we Mr. Mayor and Vice-Mayor?"

"We sure do."

Bert is skeptical, "How do we know you are the real John Lynch, not some imposter who's out to play a huge practical joke to gain some notability and get your picture on the front page of the News."

John grins, “Well, that’s not difficult to do these days – just last month the News featured a drunkard and a felon on the front page of the Sunday edition. I thought that that was not a particularly newsworthy item to put on the front page of The News. Anyway, you don’t have to take my word for it, although I was always known as an honest and truthful man. Look at my clothes, look at my shoes. I did not buy these clothes at Brooks Brothers or get these shoes at Nordstrom and I can recite from my restored memory the inscription on my grave marker: ‘Founder of Lynchburg, Who Was The Proprietor of Lands Upon Which The City Is Built And For Whom The City Is Named. A Zealous Quaker, Benevolent Gentleman And Promoter Of Whatever Advanced The Good Of The Community.’ I wrote this myself.”

He looks straight into the eyes of our city manager, the mayor and vice mayor; they think to themselves: “This man is for real.”

Joan speaks, “We are people of faith, and we’ll take you at your word. I always thought there was something profoundly spiritual about the legend of Rip Van Winkle and now transhumanists are exploring the realities of immortality. So lets have a talk about Lynchburg, past and present.”

John begins, “The first thing I want to say is that I have always had a passion for the freedoms, business and education. This is why I’ve been so impressed with the progress in our beloved city over the last 200 years in all of these critical arenas. Our city’s economy has always been vibrant, diverse, and adaptable. For over two centuries, Lynchburg has been blessed with strong business leaders who have been quick to recognize changes in market conditions and make adjustments in business practices to meet the realities of shifts in business opportunities, agricultural techniques and manufacturing. When I founded the city, tobacco was our city’s life blood. Many of my friends grew rich from the manufacture and sale of that “bewitching

vegetable,” as it was so appropriately named. We built warehouses to which tobacco was hauled over rough roads to be stored, inspected and marketed. These hogsheads, as they were known, were repacked and sent down the James River and Kanawah Company’s canal to Richmond for sale and manufacturing. I take some credit for the fact that Lynchburg had the second highest per capita income of any city in the United States. But with the demise of dark-leaf tobacco, our business leaders were not caught unaware that chewing tobacco was on the way out and cigarettes were in. The city began to wean itself from its dependence on tobacco. You may not remember, but a Lynchburger, James A. Bonsack, invented the cigarette machine that revolutionized the tobacco industry. Bonsack’s invention equaled the work of 48 workers hand rolling cigarettes and made a lot of people, like the Duke and the Reynolds families, very rich. Yet Bonsack’s cigarette machine accelerated the decline of Lynchburg’s old dark-leaf tobacco economy. However, at the same time, this invention contributed to the city’s industrial growth, and Lynchburg businessmen rolled up their sleeves and adapted; springing like full-grown children, upon Lynchburg’s economy were: foundaries, textile factories, shoe factories, and coal mining. Lynchburg’s economy was not K-O’d by the decline of dark-leaf tobacco industry.

“Henry McWane was a leader in Lynchburg’s industrial revolution. He manufactured the Bonsack cigarette machine and also cast iron gas and water pipes. He founded the Glamorgan Pipe Company, which later became the Lynchburg Foundry, and the Foundry is still an important piece of the Lynchburg economy.

Bert blurts out: “Those were the good ole days.”

“How about the leadership of Max Guggenheimer, Jr. An immigrant from Bavaria, he fought for the South in the Civil War and was later a member of City Council. He organized the Lynchburg Cotton Mill in 1888. The Cotton Mill manufactured cotton materials of various kinds.

By 1890, the Mill's payroll was at 750 and by mid-20th century it employed as many as 1200 workers."

"Mr. Guggenheimer was also the prime mover in the organization of Lynchburg's shoe industry. He backed the founders of Craddock-Terry; John W. Craddock, A. B. Craddock and T. M. Terry. In 1902, Craddock-Terry was the first true shoe manufacturing plant in the South. Lynchburg became internationally known for its shoe business and other manufacturing facilities. By 1950, Craddock-Terry was the largest manufacturer of shoes in the South and employed over 3,000 workers. Upon my return to Lynchburg, it was sad to see dark and empty Craddock-Terry buildings. But on the positive side, it was also exciting to see the renovation of former Craddock-Terry buildings, such as The BluffWalk, thanks to the imaginative efforts of Hal Craddock, and Riverviews, and Amazement Square in the old J. W. Wood Building. Downtown and the riverfront revitalizations are going very well, which pleases me very much. The reconstruction of the 9<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor has created the perfect vista from the Courthouse to the river. I congratulate Rachael Flynn for her good planning. I do not know what to think of the Langley fountain; it looks like an upside-down fire hose out of control. When the historic Academy Theatre, the city's first historic landmark, is restored, Lynchburg will again enjoy great live performances in a grand opera house by the finest professional groups in our nation. It will be the cornerstone of downtown revitalization; the historic theatre will not take second place to any Broadway theatre. Isn't that going to be great for Lynchburg and its economy? The revenues from the meals and entertainment tax will pour into the city coffers. Joan and Bert, I know the city has supported the Academy of Fine Arts restoration of the Price-Clements building, but it is my hope that the City can continue to infuse capital into the restoration of the historic theatre. The city will get a good return on its capital."

Kim, Joan and Bert nod in apparent agreement.

“Then let us not forget an international company which is still with us – locally-owned too, which unfortunately is now a rarity - C. B. Fleet Company. Charles Brown Fleet was a trained pharmacist. He bought a drugstore on Main Street after the Civil War. He was a chemist, and he invented two innovative products, Phosphate Soda and Chapstick; the rest is history.”

Kim: “We sure do love C. B. Fleet.”

“I think the city was blessed to have leaders like Max Guggenheimer, John Craddock, T. M. Terry, Dave Hugh Dillard, the McWane family, the Leggett family, and the Schewel family. Fortunately, many of the descendents of these business leaders continue to live in Lynchburg and contribute outstanding leadership to the business, civic and social life of our community.”

Bert again chimes in as he is wont to do, “Well, John, you certainly have a good understanding of the Lynchburg economy and its businesses through the 1950’s but don’t forget nearly all the businesses to which you have heaped so much praise are for the most part gone or on their deathbed with the exception of C.B. Fleet, and of course, Dodson Exterminating. I want you to know that Dodson is the biggest exterminator in the Southeast and we are locally owned. I’m President, you know.”

John nods and muses.

“Its been said that in some respects Lynchburg was like an aging playboy who had run through three fortunes: shoes, textiles, and iron; but I never lost faith in Lynchburg’s economy. Two big events have proved that my faith was not misplaced. Remember March, 1955: Babcock & Wilcox announces that it is going to build a million dollar plant making reactors and other equipment for the nuclear power industry. This was a tremendous rebooting of the Lynchburg

economy. It is reported that leaders of Babcock & Wilcox chose Lynchburg because of its excellent transportation system, the character of the community and the progressive spirit of the people. I don't know about Lynchburg's transportation system since the City was snubbed by Richmond politicians and passed over for an interstate, but those B&W folks certainly got it right about the character of our community and our progressive spirit."

All nod in agreement: Kim smiles: this man is very perceptive.

"Then about six months later, Lynchburg was chosen for "a huge" G. E. plant. Darrell Laurant has dubbed B&W and G.E.'s decisions to locate in Lynchburg, the Second Northern Invasion. There's no question that the location of these two business giants played a critical role in the continuation of the vitality of Lynchburg's business community. In addition, the executives of these companies have provided strong leadership for the entire community.

Richard Gifford was the architect of Lynchburg's desegregation plan, which won the praise and approval of Judge Merhige during the very turbulent times of school desegregation litigation. Walter Vannoy, a VMI man, had both brains and charm. That's a combination that's hard to beat. Charlie Pryor continues to be a leader in the nuclear community. John McMillian, Jack Eckert and Ray Baker guided G. E. in the 70's and 80's, and contributed their time and talents to many Lynchburg civic programs and endeavors. In my opinion, George Stewart and Ron Dolan were Lynchburg's most able, influential, and effective business leaders. George's last erection at the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Main Streets is the anchor of the Main Street business community, and I know the SpheX Club meets in its board room. Kim, I hope you will invite to tonight's meeting."

Kim answers, "You're invited."

"I'll be there."

“I’ve just named a few of the leaders, but there is no doubt that the Northern Invasion has had a profound impact on the continuing success and growth of our community. While these businesses have changed ownership, and disappeared from the local scene, their successors are still important cogs in the wheels of Lynchburg’s economy. G. E. no longer manufactures telephones and telephone equipment, but in its place we have Genworth, a large insurance company, which is a spin-off from G. E. Capital, which in turn was a spin-off from First Colony. Babcock & Wilcox has split into several companies including, Areva or BWXT. Lynchburg is poised to be a leader in the rebirth of the nuclear industry. The G. E. plant was sold to Ericsson, and when Ericsson left Lynchburg, it went dark. Joan and Bert, I commend the council’s decision to rezone this property so that Liberty could transform it into a wellspring of activities of all kinds that serve the interest of all Lynchburgers, whether Baptist Bible Belters or nay sayers.”

Joan asks, “What do you think of our efforts to coordinate business opportunities for the cities and counties with Region 2000?”

“Well, I think Region 2000 is a great idea, particularly in light of the arcane structure of counties and cities in the state of Virginia. I know Virginia is the only state in the union that has separate, independent governments for counties and cities. Region 2000 is certainly an effort to coordinate planning and business opportunities from a regional standpoint, which benefits the economies of all citizens of Central Virginia. Independent local governments make it almost impossible to achieve economies of scale and operate from a regional approach, particularly for school systems, social services, first responders such as fire and police departments, and the implementation of land use plans and public works. There’s no way to get around this now; it is too firmly entrenched in the history of the Commonwealth. But if I’d had my way, I would have

done it differently. Look at North Carolina: cities are a part of a county, and there is a unity of purpose. Look at their progress: banking, the airline industry, the research triangle, just to name a few. Lynchburg and other Virginia cities could have been in the same positions as Charlotte, Raleigh and Greensboro, but its too late now. I wish I had awakened about 100 years earlier, things might have been different if I had been around.”

Kim responds: “I wish you had too – my life would be a lot easier.”

Joan asks, “So John, speaking of business and economic development, what do you think about Jerry Falwell’s Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University?” As you know, Jerry died several months ago, and many people in and around the community are speculating whether Thomas Road and Liberty can continue to prosper after Jerry’s death. What do you think?”

“Hogwash! Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University are firmly established businesses, or should I say religious institutions, in this community and will continue to grow and prosper. There’s no doubt about it, and 34 million dollars of life insurance obviously has helped their finances. If Jerry had died 20 years ago, it might have been another story, but Jerry has people who know how to manage money and a budget. As for Liberty University, Jerry’s goal was to have 25,000 students on campus in the next five or six years, and I have no doubt that with Jerry, Jr.’s leadership those students will come. I guess the big question is where they will be housed, and how they will get around. A big transportation problem. I note recently that Liberty has made a deal with the Greater Lynchburg Transit Authority to provide transportation in and around the Liberty and Thomas Road community. I understand Liberty paid about a million dollars to GLTC, which it certainly needed, and it is a step towards eliminating the horrific traffic congestion in and around the Liberty campus.”

“John, this is Bert. I haven’t formally introduced myself, but I’m a strong supporter of Jerry’s organization. There have been several controversial issues surrounding Thomas Road and Liberty in the last year or so, and I wonder what your observations may be. First, what do you think about the LU initials on Candler’s Mountain?”

“Well Bert, I’ve always been one to recognize that growth and economic development is important for a community, and a man should be able to deal with his property within definable, reasonable boundaries. I’m not a big fan of zoning, a new concept to me; Liberty isn’t the first school or business enterprise to emboss its initials on a hillside. It certainly is no worse than the multitude of garish signs that are proliferating along Route 29, and I don’t think it is doing any great harm to the community or to the environment.”

Joan inquires, “The City Council voted six to one to rename 460W in honor of Jerry. Do you think this is a good decision?”

“Certainly, it was a good decision. We have many roads around here named for prominent Lynchburg citizens. I was pleased to see recently the naming of the 501 Expressway, the Desmond-Doss Expressway. I believe the idea was originated by Darrell Laurant, and I congratulate City Council’s decision to pick up on Laurant’s suggestion and run with it. Doss was one of Lynchburg’s most unrecognized heroes. What he did during WWII in providing battlefield medical care for many wounded troops on the island of Okinawa showed, not only tremendous courage, but faith that God was be looking over him. Its just an incredible story: he is the only conscientious objector to have won the Congressional Medal of Honor, and I believe the only Lynchburger to have done so. I think it was high time that the Lynchburg community remember Doss.”

“You are right,” answers Bert.

“There have been other instances where Lynchburg has recognized local, state and national leaders. The recent renaming of Fifth Street to honor and remember Martin Luther King, Jr., which I wholeheartedly approve and endorse, comes to mind. A bridge over the James River was named for Senator Carter Glass, which certainly was very appropriate. Senator Glass was probably Lynchburg’s most important figure from a historical sense in the first 100 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He may have been surpassed by Jerry Falwell in the past 30 years, certainly as a public figure, but Senator Glass was a national leader. He was secretary of the treasury and he established the foundation of our banking system, the Federal Reserve System. Then there’s a bridge named for me for which I’m most appreciative. And many schools in Lynchburg have been named for Lynchburg leaders. Carter Glass’ brother, E. C. Glass, the superintendent of Lynchburg Public Schools, is the most visible example. But Carl Hutcherson, Sr., R. S. Payne, Paul Munro – they are all Lynchburg citizens who have schools named for them. Lynchburg has Calvin Falwell Field. There would be no professional baseball in Lynchburg if it were not for Calvin Falwell. He’s a solid businessman too. So no, I have no problem with naming 460, the Jerry Falwell Blvd.”

Joan smiles, “We are glad that you concur, John.”

“I’m impressed with Liberty’s Law School. It is located in the restored Ericsson Building and certainly is impressive and the technology is state of the art. I have walked through the Law School; nobody recognized me, but some starred at me in my clothes. The students wear ties and are polite. That certainly is a good omen, maybe they’ll be polite lawyers. Polite lawyers are hard to find.”

Kim: “I’m glad to tell you, John, that Lynchburg has a lot of polite lawyers, John.”

“I’ve taken a tour of the new Thomas Road Baptist Church and it’s a bit like Disney World. The sanctuary is electric, and the lobby is engrossingly huge, and it looks like an airport terminal. There is a playground for children, open to the public that has all the equipment you could ever imagine. I haven’t heard young Jonathan Falwell preach, but the word on the street is he’s already as good as Jerry and performing many more baptisms. I guess that’s good. I almost met Jerry before he died. I gave him a call, but no one believed that I was alive, a little strange for those firm believers in the resurrection. Anyway, I couldn’t get through his entourage to talk with him personally. I did talk with Jerry, Jr. He said that he thinks the Baptists and the Quakers have a lot in common – gentle, peace-loving people, committed to living in harmony with their neighbors but subject to abuse from time to time from those who disagree with their religion or politics.”

Joan: “I have never thought of Quaker, and Baptist, being of the same mind, but I’ll think about it.”

John continues, “Jerry’s leadership of the Moral Majority put evangelical conservative Christians in the forefront of the Reagan revolution and on the front pages of all the national newspapers. It was good for Lynchburg, it was good for Thomas Road Baptist Church, but in the end it could be described as a moral failure with Jim and Tammy Baker as the exclamation point. Anyway, that’s all I want to say about Jerry, Thomas Road and Liberty unless you have some questions.”

Bert speaks up: “John, I’m glad you recognize that Jerry Falwell’s contributions to this city have been immeasurable. His organization is the second largest employer in the city; the influx of students and followers of Jerry have been the single most contributing factor to the explosive growth on Wards Road. Their athletic teams are competing on a national basis, and no

other governmental organization or institution has brought speakers to this community like Falwell has. Consider in the last 20 years, John McCain, Judge Robert Borke, Billy Graham, Clarence Thomas, Phil Graham, Jesse Helms, Patrick Buchanan, Newt Gingrich, and the first President Bush have spoken at Liberty's Commencements. No other organization in this area could have attracted such a star-studded cast of commencement speakers."

John adds: "Liberty has an aviation school – I know of no other college around these parts that has an aviation department, which will undoubtedly increase availability for flights out of Lynchburg rather than going to Roanoke or Greensboro. The pilot says a prayer before take off. You know the old saying: There is no atheist on a airplane flight."

Joan chimes in: "I fully endorse what Bert said. Liberty and Thomas Road together with Centra Health under the able leadership of George Dawson, are the major drivers of the Central Virginia economy. Its goal is to have 25,000 students on campus within the next 10 years. I have no doubt Liberty will meet that goal. A larger enrollment translates into a demand for more retail and restaurant opportunities, yet at the same time puts tremendous pressure on the area's highways and infrastructure. It has caused our council to think more seriously about long-range planning particularly with regard to all the "big boxes" that are on the drawing board by developers.

John reacts to Joan's comments. "You can't stop progress Joan, but the city must continue to plan effectively. Let the big boxes come. Why would the city want to stop them. I was disappointed by the council's refusal to rezone the McKenna property. Unfortunately, annexation is ancient history. Thank heavens for the 1977 Annexation. We should thank Judge Sweeney for his good judgment in ruling in favor of the City, but Lynchburg has all the land it will ever have. There can be no expansion unless the annexation moratorium is lifted. New big

boxes translate into increased employment and revenue for both local government and the private sector, both of which are good for the city; but growth must be implemented with good planning. The City is to be commended for rezoning the Ericsson building.”

John changes the subject, “Well, while we’re on education, I have been following the imbroglio at Randolph-Macon Woman’s College, oops sorry, Randolph College. The vociferous opposition certainly made known its view that the school should not abandon its 115-year history as a woman’s college. I’m not a lawyer, and I don’t understand what the plaintiffs are trying to achieve with the two lawsuits: do they want the court to order the young men to be removed from school and sent back home to their mamas? Maybe someone can explain all of this to me later. As you know, RMWC was founded in 1891 by William Smith, who was president of Randolph-Macon College in Ashland. Smith was unsuccessful in his attempts to convince R-M to accept women. As a result, Smith searched for an area that would accept the radical notion of a college for women, and he settled on Lynchburg. Quite ironic isn’t it that the college that was founded in 1891 as a result of one college’s refusal to admit men is now an uproar over its Board of Directors, known by the opposition as its board of traders, to admit men. We’ll see in the long run whether this was a good decision for the college, but in my view, now that the decision has been made, the school, its professors and alumnae should move on, mend fences, and continue to provide a high quality of education for both men and women. Randolph-Macon has enjoyed a sparkling reputation as an academic institution, and I see no reason why it cannot continue to do so with men in the classroom; the men aren’t going to pollute the high quality of education, even though men generally aren’t as smart as women. I am disturbed that it appears that some Alumnae would rather see the school’s demise rather than it succeed. This would be a horrific blow to Lynchburg. Randolph-Macon has been a critical component of not

only education in our area and state, but also has contributed to the vitality of our civic, social and political life. Two of my favorites were Dr. Jack, President for many, many years, who had a great sense of humor, and Dr. Phil Thayer, a professor of history and a member of the SpheX Club. Kim, you, Joan and Bert, might not remember Phil, but he was the quintessential college professor; bowtie, brilliant lecturer, student favorite, ardent debater, skilled actor, and social butterfly.

Bert: I remember Phil, and I am a big fan of Bill Quillian and Linda Lorimore. I've just met John Klein, the new president of Randolph College, and he is a very impressive man. Has a nice wife too; that's important.

"While we're talking about education, one of my passions, I am proud of the colleges and universities in our area. Actually, the first university founded in Lynchburg was Virginia Seminary in 1890. Then Randolph-Macon followed in 1891. At the death of Indiana Fletcher Williams in 1900, in her will she directed her estate be used to establish an educational institution for young white women in memory of her young daughter, Daisy, who died at 16. Sweet Briar was founded in 1901 for white women, and continues to this day as an all female school although it now admits Afro-Americans after the will of Ms. Williams was reinterpreted, thanks to the good lawyering by Frank Davidson. The Glass family played an important part in the success of Sweet Briar. In 1925, Carter Glass' half-sister, Meta, was named third president of Sweet Briar. She held this position until she retired in 1946. Sweet Briar continues under the able leadership of Betsy Muhlenfeld, who I hope to meet her tonight at the SpheX Club meeting.

Lynchburg College was founded a year later in 1902. Ken Garren, another member of the SpheX Club, is doing an outstanding job in continuing the college's tradition of a strong liberal arts education. Central Virginia Community College was started as a result of Gov. Mills

Godwin's leadership to establish community colleges in various localities in our state. Jerry founded Liberty in '71 and lest we forget there's Christ College founded in 1996." Lynchburg is a city of colleges."

Joan purses her mouth and says, "Well John, lets get to the core of what your visit is about. What do you think of local government? Has it done a good job over the years, and how are we doing now?"

"I'm glad you asked me that question, Joan. I affirm the record of Lynchburg City Council over the past 100 years. The leadership in Lynchburg has come from its business and educational leaders. It is important to a community to have men, now women, who have a vision for the community, but at the same time realize that a city must live within its financial resources. The community is blessed to have had effective city managers and government leaders like John Suttentfield, Harold Leggett, Abe Schewel, Ham Gay, Pete White, Leighton Dodd, Elliott Schewel, Jimmie Bryan, Joe Freeman, Preston Bryant, and now you, Kim, Joan and Bert. All of you have been intimately aware of the opportunities and needs of the Lynchburg community, and you have always, in my judgment, acted in our best interest. Partison politics was generally removed from the council's deliberations, and its actions and decisions reflected what council thought was best for Lynchburg. Unfortunately, this may not be entirely the case now, as some candidates of today are affiliated with one political party or the other. It seems to me now that more candidates have a political agenda when they run for council. This pains me, and I hope this does not continue. I think an example of this trend was the recent incident involving the appointment of Darin Gerdes to the Lynchburg School Board on a three to two vote. This created quite a controversy in the community, and the public reaction was mostly adverse. Some community leaders looked on Gerdes' appointment as an untoward exercise of

political power by conservative members of council, when Joan and Mike Gillette, considered more liberal in persuasion, were absent. The concern was this was a political maneuver by the conservatives to put pressure on the School Board to adopt policies that reflect “family values.” Don’t get me wrong, I’m for family values, but different families have different values. Mr. Gerdes’ website didn’t help this situation either. I read it, and frankly, I was appalled. Some of Mr. Gerdes’ supporters looked on this as an attack on those who are faithful to Evangelical Christianity, but I do not consider this to be the case. It was perfectly obvious that the opposition was concerned about maintaining the high quality, and non-political nature, of our school system. It was not a condemnation of Christian conservatives. I consider myself a religious conservative. The manner in which this was accomplished cut across all political, religious, and social viewpoints and attitudes. Council needed to respond to this public outcry, and I was glad to see council adopt a new ordinance that requires all members to have the opportunity to vote on appointments to city boards and commissions.”

Joan and Bert beamed; “Thanks, John.”

John continues, “Another matter which concerned me was the furor that erupted when Pedcor Investments, an out-of-state developer, proposed to build low-income apartments near the Richland Hills neighborhood. The property was zoned business but under our city’s zoning laws, Pedcor could build apartments because its land bordered a residential zone. I still don’t understand zoning. The Richland Hill community rose up in protest about this development, and council voted 7 to 0 against it, even though Pedcor lawfully could build the apartment units on the property, and it had received an endorsement from the Virginia Housing and Development Authority. First, let me say that I applaud the efforts in our community led by Laura Dupree and Ed McCann of the Lynchburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority to provide affordable

housing for citizens of our community. In my view, there is no greater obligation in a community than to exercise its legislative powers and moral persuasion to encourage better housing for all its citizens. Its disturbing to me that the opposition stereotyped those who were likely to live in this facility without any factual basis to do so, just pure speculation. Any prospective tenant for this project must have an annual income of 50% or less of the area's medium family income, which is now \$48,200.00 for a family of three. This project would provide affordable housing for the hardworking people in our community such as daycare providers, nurses aids, custodians and blue-collar workers. This project will not be overrun by ex-cons or drug dealers or gang members. It could have provided affordable housing for the sons and daughters of Richlands Hills' residents who are just starting careers. I realize this issue is now over with; the developers abandoned plans to build the apartments units in Richland Hills; my only comment is that not all affordable housing projects for medium to low income citizens necessarily will be a haven for crime and drug dealing. If one just looks at the four housing projects owned and operated by the Lynchburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority, they will know that tenants in these community projects are hardworking, law-abiding citizens who are provided affordable and decent places to live. This is to important to a city like Lynchburg, and I hope that our council will be sympathetic to any opportunity to provide housing for these citizens who need support to find a good, decent place to live."

Joan: "We get the message, John, but we can't disregard the politics of a sensitive issue like the one presented by Pedcor. I hope you'll understand."

"Well, I try to understand, but it was always my view that leaders in the community need to be particularly sensitive to the needs of those who may be under represented. That's all I've got to say."

Kim muses, "John, from your observation, how do you think the community's is handling race relations?"

"Well, I think Lynchburg has done a very good job during difficult times in responding to the turbulence that erupted with the civil rights movement. Brown vs. Board of Education was decided in 1954, and while the Supreme Court said integration should proceed with all deliberate speed, for many Virginia communities this meant we'll take our time to integrate our schools. Some communities replied, "Hell no, we will not integrate and adopted a policy of massive resistance. Lynchburg leaders grappled with a variety of suggestions for a desegregation plan for years, but Lynchburg School Board never considered closing our schools. Eight years after the Brown decision, on January 20, 1962, two black students, Owen Cardwell and Linda Woodruff entered at E. C. Glass. There was no ruckus, no riot, no scuffles, just a lot of stares."

"Lynchburg was like any other Southern town with Jim Crow laws that relegated our black citizens to a second-class status, but as former city councilperson and state legislator, Joan Jones, said the two cultures began coming together in the mid-50's. Coming together was slow but steady. Little events moved the city towards equality and away from the symbols of racism and obstacles to equality. Vivian Camm was backed up by school superintendent, Joe Spagnolo, when she removed paintings of Confederate heroes, Samuel Garland and Robert Rodes from the walls of Garland-Rodes School. Lynchburg's first republican mayor cast the deciding vote to reopen and integrate public swimming pools in 1965. Local businessman, Eddie Horner, the founder of First Colony Life Insurance Company, opened his home for meetings of the Black Revelers Club. Martin Luther King spoke at E. C. Glass two months after it was integrated in 1962. Bev Cosby was a quiet leader of the march towards equality. He opened so many avenues for progress in race relations, and he had a serenity that pervaded the community

and brought about good will among our citizens. The Lodge of the Fishermen was opened to people of all races and creeds. Bev opened his pool at the Lodge of the Fishermen when the city closed its swimming pool rather than allow young black children to swim along with whites. The Klu Klux Klan never had any real influence in Lynchburg There were protests, but no violence, no police billy clubs and no ruckus demonstrations in the streets. We were not Selma or Birmingham. Bob Morrison, our city manager, had to deal with sit-ins at Patterson Drug Store. Bob worked towards keeping the communication between the races open, and he helped establish the by-racial commission, a force of a moderation in the community. Bill Quillian, then president of Randolph-Macon Woman's College, was caught between the obligations of his college to abide by the laws of our commonwealth and his duties to support his students. Dr. Quillian did an admirable job in walking the tightest of ropes when several of his students were convicted of trespassing at Patterson Drug Store. Virgil Wood, then President of Diamond Hill Baptist Church, was considered an agitator and a rebel rouser by many Lynchburgers. When he left the city, he was replaced by Rev. Haywood Robinson who became the voice of the black community and a leader in the ongoing and never ending march toward racial justice and equality. When Haywood died several years ago, he was one of the most beloved members of our community and a man of the highest principles and religious values."

"We wholeheartedly agree that Haywood was an effective, moral and spiritual leader, and his death has left a void in Lynchburg," Joan responds.

John continues, "I feel I must comment on the Clarence Beard case. After reading all the reports in the newspapers, I think a difficult situation was handled appropriately by Kim and city council. The incident was fully investigated by both the city police and the Virginia State Police. They found that the city had not violated Beard's civil rights."

“I conclude that race relations have evolved, from the quiet suppression of blacks in the Jim Crow era beginning at the conclusion of the Civil War continuing through the 1970’s, to an era where efforts by both blacks and whites are guiding Lynchburg towards a community where all citizens work together for a better life for all its citizens. Kim, I commend you for initiating the city-wide program designed to get people in our community talking about race and racism. I agree with you that this program will spark an honest dialogue and will open eyes to things we haven’t seen about each other and about races and the issues in the city and elsewhere.”

“Well John, its getting late and I forgot to order lunch, and it was not in the budget; do you have anything else you might want to add?” Kim asked.

“I think its important to remember that the Lynchburg community has been fortunate to have so many leaders on many levels, in many capacities, and many organizations that are dedicated to improving the quality of life in Lynchburg. I don’t know where to begin. Lynchburg has a strong United Way with great community leadership and participation that more often than not meets its goal and provides funds for over 30 agencies. Habitat for Humanity, led by Tom Gerdy and Mary Adams with thousands of volunteers, has provided affordable housing for deserving citizens. Lynchburg has always reached out to those who have experienced misfortune and are suffering. Meals on Wheels, Daily Bread, Gateway and the Salvation Army continue to help the sick, needy and homeless, and I’m excited about the success of the Salvation Army’s recent expansion. Lalla Sydnor and Betsy Phillips, with the hard work of many volunteers, were instrumental in promoting awareness of cancer and its victims by planning and building the Awareness Garden. Lynchburg is known as the city of churches with its outreach programs that make Lynchburg responsive to citizens who are in need. The YMCA has served the community for over 150 years, and now with the Jamerson Branch in Wyndhurst,

no one is turned away for lack of resources. The most recent president of the Y was a black educator, Clara Jackson, who was beloved by all of her students in her career as a public school teacher. A Boy's Club was recently organized to provide intercity kids an opportunity for recreation and education in after-school programs. Susan Carrington is to be commended for her great work at Jubilee where the Jubilee Center provides a variety of programs for black and deserving children in a safe, family-oriented environment. There are many other organizations dedicated to helping those in Lynchburg and I don't have time to name them all. I just want you to know that I swell with enthusiastic pride when I look at Lynchburg and see how it is continuing to make efforts to improve life in Lynchburg."

"Thanks, John, we appreciate your compliments," says Kim.

"I am not through, Kim. Many Lynchburgers have made contributions in and beyond the city limits. Douglas Southall Freeman is one of the more distinguished Civil War historians. Dr. Walter Johnson was a coach for a young Arthur Ash at a time when Ash could not play or practice on public courts, and he was not a member of the Country Club of Virginia. Anne Spencer was a nationally recognized poet and social critic who opened her doors to many black critics and leaders including W. E. Debois and Paul Roberson. Her garden has been restored thanks mainly to the hard work and efforts of Jane White. I greatly admire John Warrick Daniel, the lame lion of Lynchburg, who represented Virginia in the House and United States Senate. An unknown Lynchburger, Bernard Fauber Co., Fauber who began his career as a stock boy at S. S. Kresge on Main Street and completed his career as the CEO of K-Mart. Vinnie Giles, Lynchburg's greatest golfer, learned to play golf under the tutelage of Oakwood's Caddy Master Morris Alexander and won both the U.S. and British Amateur titles. I wish he had turned pro. Ed Barksdale, a former member of City Council, has a son, Dr. Edward M. Barksdale, Jr. who

has been recently named Chairman of Pediatric Surgery at Case Medical Center, Children's Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio. I know Ed is proud. Even you, Kim, have taken time out of your busy schedule to help our Gulf Coast neighbors. I commend you and your wife for delivering four surplus police cars from Lynchburg to Gulfport, Mississippi. What a wonderful gesture. Then there's Leland Malvin, a graduate of Heritage High School who is now an astronaut. What a great story, not only for Leland and his family, but for this community. Other examples are many, but one caught my eye. I notice recently where two United Methodist Church pastors are trying to combine with two predominantly black churches with two white churches to create a new multi-cultural mission. The old saying by Billy Graham that 11 o'clock on Sunday is the most segregated hour in America is certainly true. These churches have combined services and plan to create a multi-cultural choir and a Wednesday night mission meal. This is again a indication of the efforts of members of this community to seek and promote racial harmony and contribute to the improvement of race relations. Well, I've said enough."

Kim looks to Joan and Bert and says, "Well is there anything else we'd like to ask?"

There's no response at first but then Kim says, "What do you see as our challenges in the future? I have to manage in a time when all things seem to be moving faster and faster. It is hard to keep up. All I hear about is the challenge of change. I get an uneasy feeling that change may be out of control.

John Lynch gazes off in the distance: "Kim, the future is now – that should not be shocking, should it? Some say it is the economy stupid. I say it's both the economy and the environment stupid. What is good for the environment is good for the economy. Pollution of any kind – air, water, ground or biological, harm business. Government at all levels, including Lynchburg, must work diligently to clean and improve the environment and reduce pollution.

We hear talk about the effect that greenhouse gases are have on the earth's climate . I think there is no doubt about it, but we have serious local problems with the sorry state of the James River and other Commonwealth waterways. It grieves me to see that the presence of mercury in the James. Something has to be done about this.”

“The City must continue to pursue all avenues and revenues to complete the CSO project. Delay with the completion of this project will only continue to the deterioration of the James. I love the James, and I want to see it stay the lovely, beautiful river it was when I started my ferry.”

“Don't turn away the big boxes and encourage small business. They are the lifeblood for the full employment and the continuing prosperity in our City. Please continue to encourage new business to locate in the Lynchburg area.”

“Lift the moratorium on annexation or work for consolidation with the counties.”

“I was worried about the Plaza until it was given to Liberty several weeks ago. I don't know the detail plans for the redevelopment of the Plaza, but if anything is done by Liberty, it will be an improvement. The City needs to support any plans for the renovation and revitalization of Lynchburg's first shopping center.”

“I saw an article recently that a town in New Hampshire had passed an ordinance prohibiting public nudity. I'm against public nudity. If you don't have a anti-nudity ordinance I believe you should adopt one.”

“Downtown restoration is progressing, and the City should do all it can to give financial support and encouragement for private businesses to locate in or restore old buildings. This is good for the City as it increases the real estate tax base and provides goods and services to the citizens of Lynchburg.”

“This includes Fifth Street. There have been many convocations and conclaves about Fifth Street. Now it’s time to get something done. Mr. Kittner ought to help by completing his obligation to restore the property at the corner of Fifth and Federal.”

“Continue to develop a good community development plan and follow it.”

“Lynchburg has a strong public school system. Please continue to give it appropriate financial support; keep teachers’ pay competitive. The school system is no better than they quality of the teachers.”

In the words of John Winthrop, “Let our Lynchburg be the City Upon the Hill upon which the eyes of Virginians gaze in respect and admiration.”

“Well, I’ve said enough, you know how I feel about Lynchburg. I’m going to hang around awhile. I’ll keep my eye on you, Kim, Joan, and Bert. I congratulate all of you. I know you will continue to provide strong, effective leadership to our grand city. John gets up, makes a pronounced bow, walks toward the door, turns, smiles broadly and says, “It’s great to be alive and living in Lynchburg - today.”