

Every Man is the Architect of His Own Future
by Harry Zirkelbach 10-04-2010

The child was believed to believe he could be President. Constantly. His frontal lobe had no other thought planted. He marched to this inside drummer. And he never expressed a doubt publicly while these devoted parents mentored.

He was the last one of these devoted parents who must have found a flaw in earlier progeny, for none had been so indoctrinated. And this began when he was too young to question. Nor did he ask why he was being offered this destiny.

He had three brothers a good deal older. They were small giants, handsome, witty, worldly, easy going, liked by everybody. Had any been whispered this encouragement continually, their friends might have thought it possible.

But this son was of small stature. And while more than bright, healthy, he learned at a young age, he was quite unique. His physique was trim, on the thin side, and nothing that he did called attention to each foot having six toes, a big toe and five perfectly proportioned smaller toes.

Each foot was wide, the only hint of something different, this requiring a close foot study to take in the difference, a boy with twelve toes.

Since this was a small community, most thought there were hundreds of others so blessed throughout the world. Gave it no further thought.

This son just required a larger shoe than others his age.

The proud parents sent their son to the local private Catholic School where Bob distinguished himself by being average, except in size. He was petite, likable, polite, occasionally studied and participated in any game that excluded violence.

With classmates he became Bobby. Then on some obscure month he was given a nickname, "Peejo". Yes every boy had some obscure, affectionate, nickname.

There was no known reason for these nicknames. But Bobby disappeared and Peejo replaced him, twelve toes, slight build, everyone's friend.

In completing 8th Grade, Peejo was sent by his parents to the Preparatory High School of the same faith. By now, only his parents could see the future President in Peejo, and he has not told them that he too ceased to believe. It took the nine months of that Freshman year to convince both parents that their vision had been in error.

While he had drifted smoothly through grade school with the loving care of nuns who taught, he did not prosper under the clerical, male teacher that Freshman year.

In fact, he began rejecting authority, subjects, and teachers.

He was allowed to remain for the year, for he was obviously bright, liked by classmates. Still by the end of the Freshman year Peejo had failed several classes, was asked not to return.

He transferred to the Public High School near his parent home, graduating the same year, 1939, as his grade school friends.

He did not become Class President.

Unknown to most, Peejo joined the Army Air Corps, was in a B-17 group in Europe, was shot down, captured by the Germans.

And thereby forever remembered by classmates and friends.

At Wars end in Germany, a full page Life Magazine photo of American Prisoners of one camp released by the American Army, showed these men, laughing shouting, cheering, thinned to gaunt, as they raced toward the camera.

And Peejo, identified by his real name, their President in this celebration.